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# EDITOR'S NOTE

For any publication, the naming of a new editor brings with it the opportunity to assess what has been accomplished in the past and what needs to be done in the future. That is especially true for *The American Neptune*, as it completes fifty years of publication and begins its second half-century with this issue. Another reason is economic — in recent years it has become more and more expensive to publish a high quality scholarly journal. Therefore, with the help of the Peabody Museum of Salem's Director of Publications Dr. Donald Marshall, we have spent the past few months working on ways to maintain quality, increase readership, and cut costs.

The results of some of our efforts are now in your hands. We have a new cover, paper stock, and printer, and the journal is now being typeset on computer here at Cleveland State University. These innovations will help to offset the increasing costs of producing the journal, while maintaining the high quality upon which both its publishers and readers insist. We hope that the new look will prove pleasing to all.

Readers will also notice that the journal's staff has expanded. Assistant Editor Jan Copes, who joined the masthead in the last issue of 1990 to help with both editing and production tasks, is now in turn joined by two additional editors. Briton C. Busch, the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of History at Colgate University (whom many of you know better as Tony), will bring his considerable skills to bear as the journal's Book Review Editor. Dan Finamore, Associate Curator of Maritime History at the Peabody Museum, will serve as News Editor and keep readers informed of news about marine museum events and activities, conferences, and other maritime issues. And the steady hand of Mrs. Geraldine Ayers of the Peabody Museum will remain at the *Neptune*'s helm as Managing Editor to provide us the benefit of her years of experience. We believe that this team will produce a journal that is responsive to the interests of a wide variety of readers.

Many *Neptune* readers have shared their views of the journal with me over the past few months. Some feel that the journal has become too technical, others feel that it is first and foremost a scholarly publication, while still others lament the paucity of articles on art, music, literature, and folklore. Others would like to see the journal serve the more practical purpose of keeping readers informed of recent activities in the maritime field through the inclusion of museum and conference news, and sections on documents, notes and queries. We hope that it is not too ambitious to try to satisfy all of these interests.

Thus, we begin Volume 51 with a personal account by one of the *Neptune*'s founders, Lincoln Colcord, that actually should have appeared in Volume 1 in 1941. This article was solicited by Samuel Eliot Morison during the journal's infancy, but never appeared. Then Spencer Tucker follows with a look at the Stevens Ironclad Battery, a vessel that was designed to reflect state-of-the-art technology in mid-nineteenth century ships of war, but whose promise was never realized. Next Paolo Coletta examines the beginnings of naval aviation with a biographical article on one of its pioneers — Rear Admiral William A. Moffett. Christine Holden follows with an account of Rear Admiral George Tate's experiences in the Russian Imperial Navy during the Napoleonic Wars.

It is appropriate at the start of the *Neptune*'s fifty-first year to present an article that takes a look back at the journal's beginnings and offers some thoughts about the future. The journal began at one of the nation's oldest museums, the Peabody Museum of Salem, which has recently opened a special Gallery of Maritime Arts. So we inaugurate our "News" section with a glimpse at the new gallery's first exhibit, provided by the Peabody's Associate Curators of Maritime History, Paul Winfisky and Dan Finamore.

Finally, the *Neptune* is pleased to join in extending congratulations to Anthony S. Nicolosi of the Naval War College Museum. Mr. Nicolosi has received the U.S. Navy Prize in Naval History for his article "The Founding of the Newport Naval Training Station, 1878-1883," which appeared in the Fall 1989 issue of our journal. The prize is awarded jointly by the Naval Historical Center and the Naval Historical Foundation.

TIMOTHY J. RUNYAN

Cleveland, Ohio

# To Windward of Schooners: Lincoln Colcord and the Bark *Harvard*

PARKER BISHOP ALBEE, JR.

FIFTY years ago Samuel Eliot Morison, immersed in writing his Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Christopher Columbus, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, was forwarding chapter drafts to Lincoln Colcord in Searsport, Maine, for his close friend's critical review.[1] Colcord, a fifth-generation seafarer, noted journalist, and popular writer of sea stories, had spent most of his youth aboard his father's sailing vessels and was among America's pre-eminent maritime authorities. First meeting in 1921, Morison and Colcord had discovered a shared passion for the sea and sail — and a keen liking for each other. The intervening years saw numerous family reunions, in Searsport and at the Morison's summer bungalow on Mt. Desert Island, cherished sails in Maine waters, and an active correspondence when distance drew them apart. A special bond existed between the two men, and Colcord's encyclopedic knowledge of the sea was much respected by his friend in Boston. "The Sage of Searsport," Morison had fondly dubbed his frequent companion Down East.[2]

Colcord's nautical expertise was of particular interest to the Harvard historian as he penned *Admiral of the Ocean Sea* in early 1941, for many of Colcord's sailing days had been aboard the bark *Harvard*. "As Columbus' ships were essentially a barque rig, the mizzen being lateen, and the other two masts rigged square," Morison wrote, "your experience on the barque *Harvard* will be valuable." There followed a specific request: "I also want in black and white that story you have often told of the *Harvard* getting to windward of schooners."[3]

Colcord obliged. In March 1941 he finally committed to paper the oft-told story from his youth which Morison had requested, and mailed it to Boston.[4] The *Harvard* story "seems to me good enough for the *American Neptune*," Morison promptly replied, asking for permission to forward it to the *Neptune*'s editor, Walter Whitehill.[5] Colcord demurred; he would rather wait and write a more extensive article — which, characteristically, was never written.[6] For this Searsport author of sea fiction was loath to publish along an autobiographical vein, choosing instead to share his youthful maritime experiences with intimates in the coziness of his back porch overlooking Penobscot Bay or on sparkling sails along the coast. Aside from one rare indulgence in the form of an autobiographical sketch, "I Was Born in a Storm at Sea," published by *The American Magazine* in 1923, the story of Colcord's adventurous youth remains unpublished to this day.[7]

Five decades after its writing, Colcord's relatively lengthy and detailed account of the *Harvard* "getting to windward of schooners" is published here, together with the photograph Morison suggested. Of all the ships upon which Colcord sailed, *Harvard*, commanded by his father Lincoln Alden Colcord, was his greatest love. A quarter century after leaving her decks at the age of fourteen, he would write his sister, Joanna Carver Colcord:[8]

1. S.E. Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus*, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1942).

2. For a description of the Morison-Colcord friendship and an edited selection of their correspondence, see P.B. Albee, Jr., "Portrait of a Friendship: Selected Correspondence of Samuel Eliot Morison and Lincoln Colcord, 1921-1947," *The New England Quarterly* 56 (1983): 163-199, 398-424.

3. Samuel Eliot Morison to Lincoln Colcord, 4 February 1941, Lincoln Colcord papers in the possession of Brooks Colcord (hereafter cited as Colcord MSS).

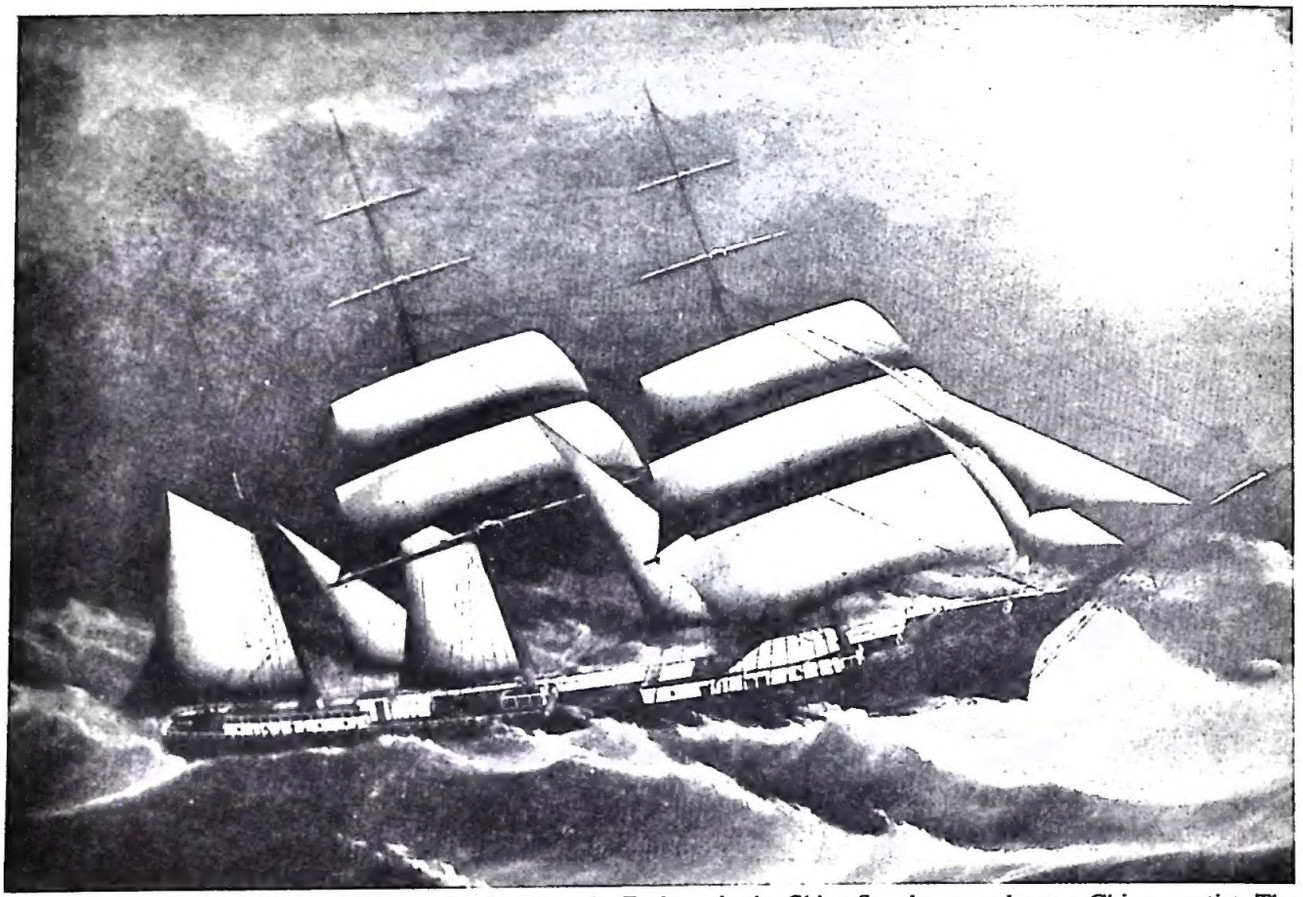
4. Colcord to Morison, 25 March 1941, carbon copy in Colcord MSS.

5. Morison to Colcord, 4 April 1941, Colcord MSS. Walter Muir Whitehill, first editor of *The American Neptune*, was a friend of Morison and Colcord, and all three helped to found the journal.

6. Colcord to Morison, 10 April 1941, carbon copy in Colcord MSS.

7. L. Colcord, "I Was Born in a Storm at Sea," *The American Magazine* 96 (1923): 18-19, 74-80. Walter Whitehill has written of Colcord: "He dearly loved to talk. His friends wished he would write as he had spoken, but in later years he seldom did ...." W.M. Whitehill, *Analecta Biographica: A Handful of New England Portraits* (Brattelboro, Vermont: The Stephen Greene Press, 1969), p. 53.

8. The following is taken from Lincoln Colcord to Joanna Carver Colcord, 17 February 1922, Colcord MSS.



*Bark* Harvard, *Lincoln A. Colcord, Master. On the Edge of a Typhoon in the China Sea*, by an unknown Chinese artist. The vessel was 180' long with a 36½' beam and 21' draft. Courtesy of Brooks Colcord.

> Clearing up my chest in the attic the other day, I came across the enclosed photograph of the *Harvard*. It's the only one we have. It was taken in the outer harbor of Singapore, by Joe Sweetser, I think.[9] I believe it was on the voyage when you weren't along. Doesn't it look natural? With you, of course, another ship has intervened, to divide your affection;[10] but the *Harvard* was the only vessel I knew, and she lives in my heart with so much of delight and anguish, so that only to look at her picture always brings the tears to my eyes. I loved her dearly, and can feel her, even yet.

Joanna, like Lincoln, was born at sea. In fact, both Colcord children entered the world on the same voyage aboard the bark *Charlotte A. Littlefield*: Joanna off New Caledonia in 1882 and Lincoln in a gale off Cape Horn in 1883. Growing up on board ship became an adventure for the children, the more so for Lincoln who received fewer parental restrictions. While Joanna was denied the "joy" of climbing aloft, her younger brother was free to climb the masts at will, even to the royal yard a hundred feet above the deck: "From that height the ocean assumes a wider, distant look .... I used to sit by the hour astride the yard, one arm around the royal backstay, the only inhabitant of a world all my own."[11] Their seven years together on board *Harvard* were perhaps their most formative, commencing as they did in 1890 when Joanna was eight and Lincoln seven.

In *Harvard* the Colcord family — father, mother

9. Captain Joseph D. Sweetser, cousin of Lincoln's and Joanna's mother, Jane Sweetser Colcord. Lincoln's reference to *Harvard* as "the only vessel I knew" should be interpreted as meaning *Harvard* was the vessel he knew by far the best.

10. The ship which "intervened" to divide Joanna's affection was *State of Maine*, which their father commanded from 1899 to 1903 and on which Joanna made two voyages to Hong Kong while Lincoln remained home for his education.

11. J.C. Colcord, "Childhood at Sea: An Early Education in the Realities of Life," *Portland Sunday Telegram*, July 12, 1936, Section D, 1, and L. Colcord, *American Magazine*, p. 76.

(Jane Sweetser Colcord), Link and Nan — "made many voyages, short ones to 'the River' [the Plate in Argentina] and long ones to China," Joanna reminisced. "The one we children recall most clearly," she added, "was a two-years' voyage, when we were just entering our teens, that took us successively to South Africa, Australia, Peru, Portland, Oregon, the west coast of Mexico, and back to Puget Sound."[12] This long voyage, sailing from New York in early summer 1895, "we children liked best [of] all."[13] For their parents, however, the journey was not without its travails. Disastrous financially, the voyage found Mrs. Colcord hospitalized by the winter of 1897 in Victoria, British Columbia, following a miscarriage and with her family despairing of her life. Eventually she recovered, but not to the extent of being able to sail aboard *Harvard*. In January she, Lincoln, and Joanna boarded a Canadian Pacific train (tourist, third class) for the trip across the continent, leaving Captain Colcord to return home around the Horn without his family.[14] The family's separation in the Pacific Northwest marked the end of voyages together aboard *Harvard*. This beloved home of Lincoln's and Joanna's youth was lost, with all hands saved, in Caribbean waters — a coral reef five miles off Grand Turk island claiming the vessel in March of 1898.

As the years passed fond memories of *Harvard* endured, perhaps none greater than those of the vessel's speed and seaworthiness. "The fast little Boston bark *Harvard*," Joanna lovingly recalled their craft.[15] Lincoln elaborated upon their pride:[16]

> No seaman likes to be outsailed. Happily for my peace of mind, my boyhood was spent on board a fast

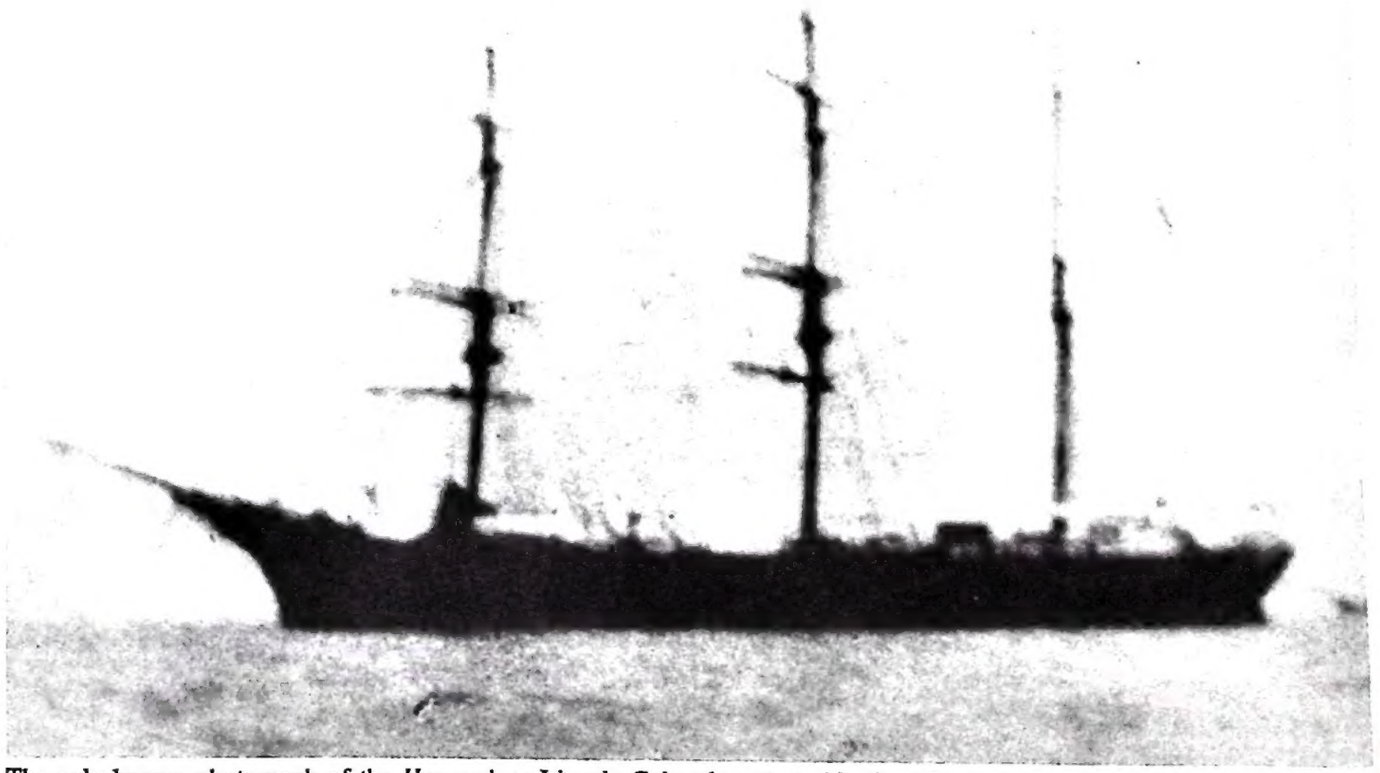
12. J.C. Colcord, "Childhood at Sea."

13. J.C. Colcord, "Care U.S. Consul: The Letters of a Seafaring Family," unpublished draft, n.d., p. 5, Colcord MSS.

14. Ibid.

15. J.C. Colcord, "Childhood at Sea."

16. The following is taken from L. Colcord, *American Magazine*, p. 74.



The only known photograph of the *Harvard*, as Lincoln Colcord wrote to his sister Joanna, was taken in the outer harbor of Singapore in 1892. Courtesy of Brooks Colcord.

ship. She was the clipper bark *Harvard*, a low, black-painted craft of a thousand tons register, hailing from Boston. This handsome little vessel was a jewel of seaworthiness and sailing qualities. She would lay up within five points of the wind, and sail her best close-hauled; I have seen her beat to windward through a fleet of schooners. She was a marvel in light airs, rarely losing steerage way, slipping through the water at three knots in a breeze that could barely be felt, when other ships were turning around to look at themselves. Best of all, the *Harvard* would tack in a teacup, and never was known to miss stays.

A description of the *Harvard*'s ability to "beat to windward through a fleet of schooners" comprised the story Link sent to his friend Sam Morison in 1941. The episode he recounted occurred during the last leg of one of the family's "short" voyages to the River Plate. The Colcords had set sail on 16 August 1894, arriving in Buenos Aires on 22 October. There they spent Christmas "with all the other captains, English, French, German, celebrating."[17] On the long passage home to Boston and light-loaded with wool, *Harvard* encountered the hardest weather she had yet experienced. "This was a terrible winter north of Hatteras," Lincoln later wrote, "those at home waited in deep anxiety, the vessel was long overdue, reports of disasters filled the papers ...." The ship had been hove-to on the starboard tack in a single circular storm for eighteen consecutive days "in which time she had cut a small circle on the chart, and returned to her starting-place, the wind having gradually hauled through every point of the compass."[18] The storm over, *Harvard* made her way north to a point off the coast of Chatham, Cape Cod. There on a cold February day in 1895 the bark came upon the aforementioned fleet, some twenty-five coastwise schooners. The experience that ensued follows here — a story from Colcord's youth extant thanks to Morison's prodding and his own proclivity to save.[19]

BARK *HARVARD*

The question of how close to the wind a square rigged vessel could point was determined by how sharply her yards could be braced up. This, in turn, was determined by the spread of the lower shrouds at the eyes of the rigging, and differed greatly in different vessels. The practice was to brace the main yard hard up against the lee rigging, and all the other yards on the mainmast were then checked in a little, the check steadily increasing to the topmost sail. The yards on the fore and mizzen would always brace up sharper than on the main. Thus the ship could be steered by-the-wind by the lifting of the weather leech of the topmost sail set on the main, while all other sails set would still be full.

It can be seen at once that the width of the vessel, and the length of the main lowermast, were the two mathematical factors which governed the spread of the main lower shrouds, and hence determined how sharply the main yard, the key to the whole arrangement, could be braced up. On a beamy ship with short lowermasts, the lower shrouds sprang from the masthead at a wide angle, and the main yard fetched up against them on the lee side sooner, thus preventing it from being braced up sharply. On a narrow vessel with lofty spars, the angle of spread of the shrouds was more acute and the vessel could be braced up more sharply.

A whale ship like the *Charles P. Morgan*, with stumpy masts and broad of beam, probably could not head closer than six and a half points to the wind; whereas the clipper ships, narrow and lofty, could be braced up to head within five points of the wind.

On commercial schooners, the closeness with which they could lie to the wind was determined by the swing to leeward of the gaffs of the lower sails. Vangs were never used on these gaffs; the sail itself did all the work. These sails were lofty and the swing to leeward of the gaffs was considerable. Contrary to the popular notion, a large three- or four- or five-masted schooner could not ordinarily sail closer than six points to the wind. She could not lie to the wind so closely as a narrow and well-trimmed square rigged vessel.

As an instance of this I recall an occasion on board the bark *Harvard*. The *Harvard* was a clipper bark of 1,000 tons, built in 1878 by Atkinson & Fillmore at Newburyport, Mass., and hailing form Boston. In 1895, when this incident took place, she was commanded by my father, Captain Lincoln A. Colcord, and I was on board as a boy of twelve in the afterguard with my mother.

We were coming on the "Coast" in the winter time, bound from Singapore to Boston, and had encountered a succession of easterly storms.[20] We finally worked up to the South Channel, and were off Chatham on a certain forenoon in February, I think. The wind had swung around to the westward during the night, and the weather was

17. J.C. Colcord, "Care U.S. Consul," p. 4.

18. L. Colcord, "Letters from Sea," unpublished draft, c. 1913, p. 12, Colcord MSS.

19. The following is taken from L. Colcord, enclosure with letter to Morison dated 25 March 1941, carbon copy in Colcord MSS.

20. Colcord writes that *Harvard* was bound from Singapore, but the preponderance of the evidence indicates *Harvard* was bound from Buenos Aires when this incident occurred.

Lincoln Colcord in the cabin of the bark *Harvard* at about age ten. Courtesy of Brooks Colcord.

clearing off in genuine and dependable fashion; the sun was bright, the sky cloudless, the wind came from a little North of West at About Force 4, say 15 miles — and it was cold. We were heading North up the Cape with all sail set, sailing full-and-by. The *Harvard* carried no skysails.

Owing to the two previous weeks of easterly weather, a large fleet of coastwise schooners bound northward had accumulated at Vinyard Haven ("Holmeses Hole"), waiting for a chance to get across the Shoals. This fleet, with the westerly clearoff during the night, had got under weigh early, and was out ahead of us as we came up under the lee of the Cape. There must have been twenty-five schooners in the fleet, mostly three- and four-masters; five-masted schooners had not come on the scene at that date. They, too, were under full sail, with all gaff topsails and headsails set. It was a handsome sight.

There could not have been a better opportunity to observe how these vessels sailed, or the comparative points involved. We were all strung out along the same course, hugging the Cape as closely as possible, all sail set, a beautiful breeze, fairly smooth water — ourselves in the rear. Such a point as the angle of swing of the various gaffs was perfectly apparent to us, since all the vessels ahead were heading exactly our same course. My father at once began to notice that many of these schooners were already sailing by-the-wind — that is, their gaff topsails were lifting, showing that they could not have pointed any higher — while we were sailing rap-full. By careful calculations with the compass he estimated that the whole fleet was then heading within six points of the wind. The schooners had reached their limit; we could have come up a point higher.

It should be said that at least half of these schooners were flying light, bound north for lumber cargoes; these vessels made a lot of leeway and fell to leeward rapidly. They also sailed badly and plainly were at their worst under these conditions. The other half were deeply loaded with coal; these made little leeway and sailed better. The *Harvard*, on the other hand, was in the pink of condition, loaded with light China cargo to about three-quarters of her draft, or 18 feet; and she was always a remarkable vessel when sailing on the wind. She would reel off ten knots close hauled without a murmer, but in sailing free could never be driven to more than eleven knots. The explanation of this always puzzled my father, but it was a great joy to him, especially in the China Sea. He always chose to beat her up the China Sea against the northeast monsoon instead of going around by the Eastern Passages.

Before we came abreast of Truro light that noon we had overhauled the fleet and were sailing among the schooners. Many of them had fallen out of the race to leeward, those bound for the coast of Maine now struck off on their own course, and we were left with possibly six or eight deep-laden schooners bound like ourselves to Boston. These would have to beat up Massachusetts Bay with us against an increasing wind and sea.

It was here that I took the helm for a two-hour trick. The *Harvard* was a perfect vessel to steer on the wind; she would carry on for miles with the weather leech of the main royal lifting, with only a touch of the helm. The reduced fleet now hauled its wind as closely as possible, standing over for Thatcher's Island on the port tack, the wind having hauled to W.S.W. It at once became apparent that we were heading a full point closer to the wind than any of the schooners; we were also going much faster through the water. We simply cut to windward across their stems, passing them all and leaving them to leeward in the course of a single tack over towards Thatcher's and back towards Minot's Ledge. I stood at the wheel during most of this operation, and when I wasn't at the wheel I watched everything closely. The schooners simply were not in our class on this point of sailing. The *Harvard* raced out ahead with the greatest of ease and took the first tug boat late that afternoon off Boston Light.

I recollect very clearly the scene at sunset, as the

hawser was passed and we clewed up our sails. Half a dozen tug boats were puffing down towards the fleet astern, belching smoke and making a great fuss. The nearest schooner, a big four-master and quite the smartest of the fleet, must have been three or four miles away. Several others seemed almost on the horizon.

Searsport, Maine
March 26, 1941

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Such memorable experiences ended for Lincoln four years later. Having lost *Harvard*, his father gained a new command, *State of Maine*, which embarked in the spring of 1899 without Lincoln on board. Senior year at Searsport High School loomed ahead that fall, and his parents were adamant that he remain home to pursue his education. With nose pressed against the cold glass window in his Searsport home, he watched down the Bay as the "Bangor boat" bearing his mother and sister disappeared from view. His kin had commenced a journey to New York harbor, there to join his father and *State of Maine* for a year-long voyage to Hong Kong — his favorite port of call.

Their departure represented a wrenching moment for the young man of fifteen, and its memory would forever haunt him. Nearly fifty years would pass and his life would near its end before he confided that moment's impact:[21]

"It is hard to communicate the grievousness and depth of that obscure and tragic scene — I stood at the south window and watched the boat pass around the Bluff — No one knew, I was merely a lonely youth ....

They were going away to sea, while I was left at home. They were joining the ship, my dear ship, in which my whole heart and being were wrapped up[22] — The beauty of the day did not matter — the fact that we loved each other and were sad at parting did not matter — No one knew but me — They thought it was better to leave me at home to go to school — My father and mother, who were going to sea because they had to, in order to earn their living, were dwelling at home always in their hearts and minds — To leave me there seemed to them all that I could ask for — I was at home, the happy place in which they longed to be .... The things I was thinking and feeling were so far removed from their conception of them that now, after fifty years, one can only smile through one's tears at it — the fine Greek blend of comedy and tragedy — Anyway they were gone and I stood alone — I remember standing at the south window for a long time — The boat went around the Bluff, and disappeared from view — I stood there with nothing in the future — I did not cry — I stood rigid, with my face pressed against the cold glass ... longing to go with them because I loved the sea ....

Well, it was indeed a sad and tragic afternoon. But these things happened to people, and they do survive — I am frank to say, now that many years have gone by and my life is reaching its end, that this afternoon marked my character for all time. I never recovered from it. Every detail of it stands in my consciousness today as vividly as on the day it happened — Among all the things that have come to me in life — and they have been many and interesting and dire — this moment stands out as the one controlling incident .... I only know that at that moment I had to call on all the strength that God had vouchsafed me when he brought me forth, and that it was enough at least to keep me in the world of the living — to go on to other things not contemplated then, and to fail to bring to fruition all that I saw there as a wonderful dream — the only thing I could evoke to make possible the acceptance of the stroke that had befallen me."

This life-long lover of the sea died suddenly in November 1947 at the age of 64. Among the mourners attending his funeral services in the old white Congregational Church in Searsport was Sam Morison, an honorary pallbearer whose own wife's death two years earlier had occasioned Link to comfort his grieving friend:[23]

"Dear Sam:

I enjoyed your fine letter very much. It made me sad, Sam, to think how sad you are. I'm sorry, and you know my heart is with you. Bessie was so lovely — I think of her often, so serene and gay and full of happiness always for everyone she met.[24] She was a superior human being, who of course had met unhappiness and disappointment of a sort, as everyone does, but none of it ever showed up in her attitude towards life. I looked forward always with warm affection to seeing her each year, and I cannot yet realize that I shall not see her again.

Life and death are a strange business, aren't they?

21. The following is taken from L. Colcord, unpublished reminiscence, n.d., Colcord MSS.

22. Colcord's reference to "my dear ship" should not be taken literally as he never undertook a long voyage on *State of Maine*.

23. The following is taken from Colcord to Morison, 21 November 1945, carbon copy in Colcord MSS.

24. "Bessie" refers to Elizabeth Shaw Morison, Morison's first wife.

This matter of being conscious and alive — and then being dead — it is amazing .... Here we are, alive and conscious, yet what of the universe, and what is it all about, and what comes to us in the end? It brings deep and fundamental thoughts. Somehow, it always turns me to astronomy; I like to go out in the night and look at the sky, and think of the vast spaces and the unknown problems and the amazing insignificance of human life in the face of what is rolling around before us all the time."

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Until the end of his days Lincoln Colcord possessed a profound wonder for all that surrounded him, just as he had as a boy astride the *Harvard*'s royal yard. His youth at sea — and the taking leave of it — had indelibly marked his soul.

*Lincoln Colcord attended the University of Maine, later becoming a writer of sea stories and then Washington correspondent for the* Philadelphia Public Ledger *during World War I. Shortly after the war's end he returned to Maine, where he published his fourth book,* An Instrument of the Gods *(1922). Turning from fiction to maritime history, he collaborated with his sister, Joanna C. Colcord, on* Roll and Go: Songs of American Sailormen *(1924), compiled* Records of Vessels Built on Penobscot River and Bay *(published in George S. Wasson's* Sailing Days on the Penobscot: The River and Bay as They Were in the Old Days, *1932) and became the* New York Herald Tribune*'s reviewer of maritime and naval books. He helped to found the Penobscot Marine Museum in 1936 and later* The American Neptune, *serving as an editor and contributor until his death in 1947. Colcord's contributions to the* Neptune *included "A Tidal Wave at Huanillos, Chile, in 1877" (1, no. 2 [April, 1941]: 108-115), "A Jury Rudder for the Bark* Guy C. Goss," *(2, no. 1 [January, 1942]: 65-70), and "Eastern Names," printed posthumously in volume 9, no. 2 (April, 1949): 83-86. The January, 1948 issue of the journal contained an eloquent obituary to Colcord authored by his co-founder and co-editor of the* Neptune *Walter Muir Whitehill.*

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# The Stevens Ironclad Battery

SPENCER C. TUCKER

MOST Americans have heard of the Civil War ironclads, the U.S.S. *Monitor* and the C.S.S. *Virginia* and their classic duel in Hampton Roads in 1862. Few know about the Stevens Battery, the first American ironclad; although never completed, she had a fascinating history.

Iron could save considerable weight in ship construction, and the first iron-hulled warships in the world were two steam frigates built in Britain for Mexico in 1842.[1] Within several years the British had eleven small iron steamers in their navy but a series of experiments showed that iron tended to fracture under the impact of shot, whereas wood largely absorbed it. As a result there was a swing away from iron hulls in ships.

This changed with the Crimean War, 1854-1856. The world's first ironclads to see war service were those employed by the French in the Crimea. This was a direct response to the shell gun and the Battle of Sinope, where, on November 30, 1853, the Russians utterly destroyed a Turkish flotilla of wooden warships with the use of shell. Although exploding shell had been used at sea before, most broadside guns fired solid shot. Wooden vessels with their thick hulls of oak could absorb a great number of hits from solid shot; shell, however, tore large holes in the side of a vessel. The extensive use and devastating effect of shell by broadside guns at Sinope was a revolution in naval warfare, one that did not go unnoticed by foreign observers. The French, who soon entered the war on the side of Turkey, were well aware of the effect of shell on wooden ships. Indeed, it was French Colonel Henri Paixhans who is usually given credit for the shell gun. Introduced in the early 1820s, it fired explosive shell in flat trajectory. In July 1854 the French held a series of tests in the presence of Emperor Napoleon III to determine if the use of armor plating over the traditional wooden hulls of vessels might not provide protection from shell fire. As a result the Minister of Marine ordered ten shallow draft armored vessels, although only five were actually constructed.[2]

These floating batteries were about 174 feet in length and of 1,400 tons displacement. Each had a layer of four inches of forged sheet iron armor over seventeen inches of wood, and mounted twelve 50-pounder guns. The French shared this design with the British, who modified it; by the end of 1854, the Admiralty had five ironclads of its own under construction,[3] only two of which made it to the Crimea.[4]

Three of the French floating batteries participated in an attack on Russia's Kinburn forts, located in an estuary at the mouth of the Dnieper and Bug rivers, in October 1855. The floating batteries fired more than 3,000 shot and shell at the forts, reducing them to rubble. Although hulled repeatedly, the French warships suffered little damage. For example, the *Devastation* was hit sixty-seven times but was only slightly dented.

The success of the floating batteries in the Crimean War induced both France and Britain to add ironclads to their navies. Britain built three 1,973-ton *Erebus*-class ironclad steamers armed with sixteen 68-pounders each.

At the end of 1859 the French launched *La Gloire*, the first seagoing ironclad. She was a wooden screw frigate of 5,675 tons, protected by a 4.5-inch belt of iron backed by 17 inches of wood. The British responded with the *Warrior*, launched in 1860. At 6,109 tons, she was slightly bigger than *La Gloire*. More advanced than her French counterpart, she was the first large seagoing, iron-hulled warship. The *Warrior* was protected by a 4.5-inch band of iron bolted to 0.625-inch plating and backed by 18 inches of teak. Both the *Warrior* and the *Gloire* retained sail rigs, as did virtually all the early steamers. The

1. The *Guadalupe* and *Montezuma*.

2. The *Congreve*, *Devastation*, *Foudroyante*, *Lave*, and *Tonnante*.

3. The *Glatton*, *Meteor*, *Thunder*, *Trusty*, and *Aetna*.

4. The *Glatton* and *Meteor* were the two sent to the Mediterranean. G. A. Osbom, "The First of the Ironclads. The Armoured Batteries of the 1850's," *The Mariner's Mirror* 50, No. 3 (August 1964): 189-190. For a discussion of the earliest English ironclads, see pp. 190-198.

introduction of the *Warrior* and *Gloire* brought a new era in world warship construction.

Ironically, the United States led in the development of ironclads. Robert Livingston Stevens (1787-1856) of Hoboken, New Jersey is credited with the idea of attaching iron plates to a vessel to protect it from enemy fire.[5] Stevens, an engineer and inventor, was the son of inventor Colonel John Stevens (1749-1838), a pioneer in steam navigation and land transportation. In 1808, John Stevens built the steamer *Phoenix*, the world's first seagoing steamboat. Robert Stevens handled the *Phoenix* on her maiden voyage and later operated her as a ferry between Philadelphia and Trenton. He was active in steamboat design and was responsible for innovations in rail transportation. His brother Edwin Augustus Stevens (1795-1868) was also an engineer and inventor; he gave the money to found the Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey.[6]

As early as 1812, John Stevens proposed constructing an ironclad saucer-shaped harbor defense vessel with several propellers so that it might be spun about to keep its guns always bearing. But what he called "A turtle, whose hard shell no enemy could crack," was never built.[7] Stevens made other proposals for armor plated warships, but the government also rejected these.

In 1814 Stevens and his sons developed an elongated shell; subsequently tested by both the Army and Navy, it was not adopted by either.[8] Meanwhile, Stevens and his sons continued ordnance experiments. In 1820 they proved the effectiveness of iron plate over oak in limiting the damage of projectiles. They also showed that, against an inclined target, shot bounced off harmlessly. Over the next years the Stevenses were tireless advocates of shell, shell guns, and war steamers.[9]

These experiments came at the same time as those of Paixhans in France. Paixhans agreed with the Stevenses that shell was the way of the future and that it would bring about a revolution in naval architecture, but he believed that spherical projectiles were the only practical ones.

By the late 1830s tensions between the United States and Great Britain, particularly over the disputed Canadian boundary, aroused public support for military preparedness. During the war scare of 1841-1842, the Stevenses conducted a new series of experiments at Bordentown in which they fired various caliber guns against targets plated with iron of different thicknesses. They concluded that iron plate 4.5 inches thick could, at a distance of only 30 yards, withstand 64-pounder solid shot, the heaviest then in service. Both solid shot and shell broke into small fragments on striking the target.[10] In their experiments the Stevenses used riveted iron plates rather than rolled iron, which at the time was not available in the United States. The results of these experiments were public knowledge, and ten years later du Puy de Lome, constructor of the French Crimean War ironclads, adopted about the same thickness (4 inches versus 4.5 inches used by the Stevenses) for the armor of his vessels.

The Stevens brothers now proposed building an armored vessel for the U.S. Navy, designed by Robert Stevens. President John Tyler appointed a joint Army-Navy board to study the matter, and it met at Sandy Hook in July 1841. Test firing led the board to conclude unanimously that the Stevens plates would stand up against any cannon fire then known.[11]

On January 13, 1842, the Board of Commissioners of the Navy recommended construction of a steamer on Stevens' plan to the Secretary of the Navy. On January 25, 1842, Robert Stevens presented a detailed description of a shot- and shell-proof steamer of at least 1500 tons burden. She was to be faster than any other warship of the time, and armed with long guns capable of firing both shot and his elongated shells. Stevens noted the great advantage "of being the first to construct a vessel of this description ... as it would render us secure, for a long time, against the vessels of war of other nations, as these would require

5. John Ericsson, who designed the *Monitor* and was no friend of Stevens, wrote that Stevens was "the first person proposing to protect the sides of war steamers with, or to build their sides of, plate iron sufficiently thick to resist shot." William Conant Church, *The Life of John Ericsson* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), 2, p. 117.

6. Webster's Biographical Dictionary (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1958).

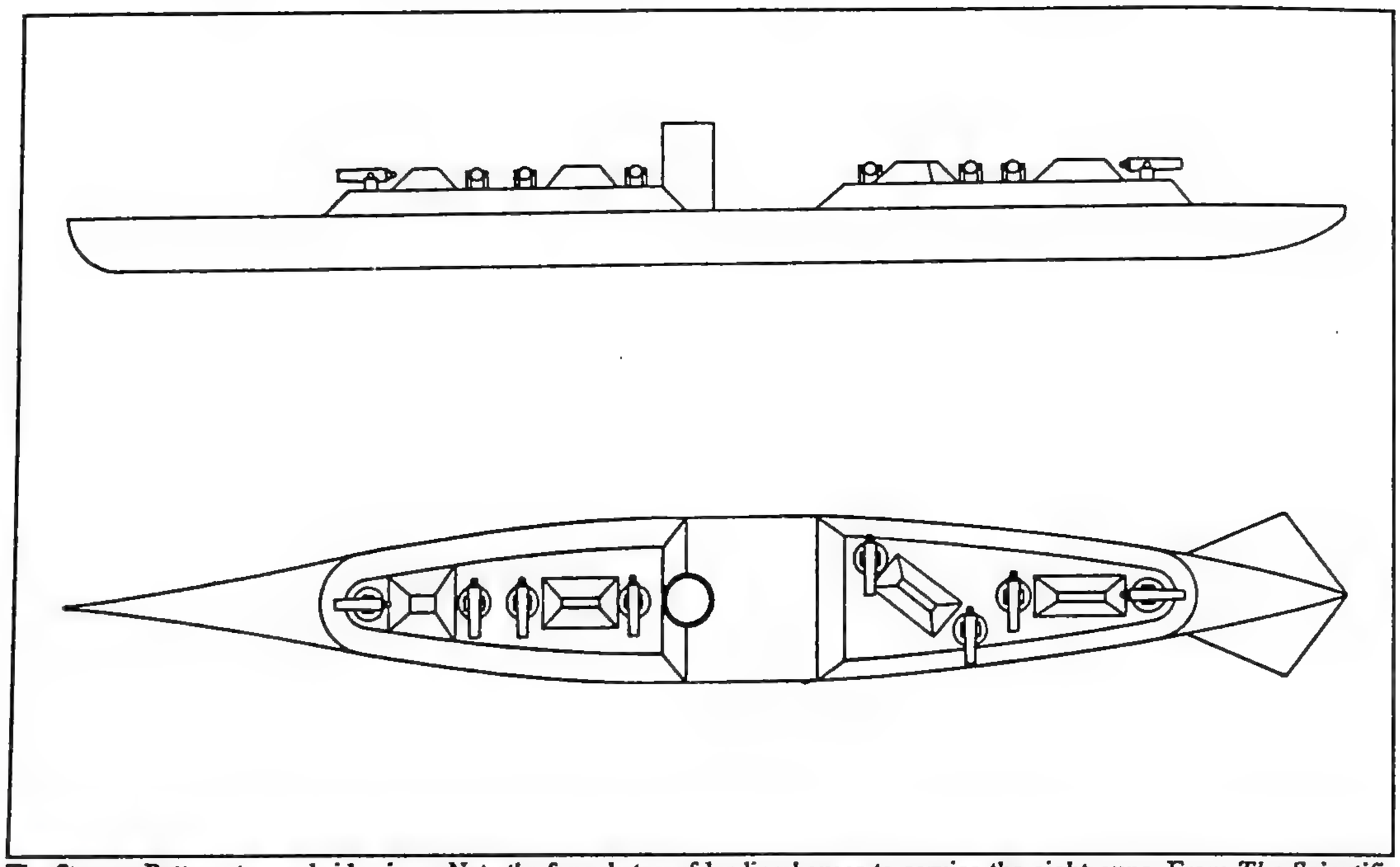
7. Archibald Douglas Turnbull, *John Stevens, An American Record* (New York: The Century Co., 1928), p. 412. Frank M. Bennett, *The* Monitor *and the Navy under Steam* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1900), p. 59.

8. Initially, exploding shell was round, like solid shot. One of the problems with the elongated Stevens projectile was that it tumbled. The contracts with the Army and Navy for the shell are in *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, 1, pp. 851-852; and *American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, 1, p. 603.

9. James Phinney Baxter, *The Introduction of the Ironclad Warship* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933), p. 23; Turnbull, *John Stevens*, pp. 386-414.

10. A three-page printed copy of the letter of E. A. and J. C. Stevens is in the *Ericsson Mss.*, i, in Baxter, *The Introduction of the Ironclad Warship*, p. 48.

11. Members of the board were Colonels Totten, Thayer, and Talcott, and Captain Huger, all from the Army; and Commodores Stewart and Perry, Captain Stringham, and Lieutenant Newman from the Navy. Robert L. Stevens, *Memorandum of the Claim of Robert L. Stevens against the United States* (Washington, January 31, 1851), p. 1; and Senate Executive Document No. 129, 32nd Congress, 1st Session, p. 1.



The Stevens Battery, top and side views. Note the four shotproof loading houses to service the eight guns. From *The Scientific American*, August 31, 1861.

to be built anew."[12] On February 15, the Chamber of Commerce of New York gave its endorsement and recommended the Stevens plan to Congress.[13]

The report of the House Committee on Naval Affairs on March 15, presented by Francis Mallory of Virginia, recommended "speedy and vigorous prosecution" to defend "the principal commercial avenues and naval establishments of the country from the danger of invasion." One of the arguments sounds as if it could have been given today: "Money drawn from the people for this object soon finds its way back into the pockets of the mechanic, the manufacturer, the laborer and the farmer, and is widely and equally diffused over the country."[14]

Accordingly, on April 14, 1842, Congress authorized the Secretary of the Navy to enter into a contract with Robert Stevens for a shot- and shell-proof war steamer to cost not more than the average expended on the steamers *Missouri* and *Mississippi*, about $600,000. The ship was intended for the defense of New York harbor.[15]

Secretary Abel Upshur and Stevens signed the contract on February 10, 1843, and Congress appropriated $250,000 to begin construction. The decision by the

12. House Report No. 448, 27th Congress, 2d Session, p. 12.

13. Senate Executive Document No. 129, 32d Congress, 1st Session, p. 1.

14. House Report No. 448, 27th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 1, 14.

15. "An Act authorizing the Construction of a Steamer for Harbor Defense," *Statutes at Large*, 5, p. 472. The principal printed sources on the Stevens Battery are: House Report No. 448, 27th Congress, 2d Session; Senate Report No. 129, 32d Congress, 1st Session; Senate Executive Document No. 34, 37th Congress, 2d Session; House Executive Documents No. 23 and 121, 37th Congress, 2d Session; the annual reports of the Secretary of the Navy; and some pamphlets: Edwin Augustus Stevens, *The Stevens Battery, Memorial to Congress, Merits of the Battery as Unanimously Admitted by the Board of Examiners, Opinions of Experts and Results of Experiments Disproving the Objections of the Majority* (New York, 1862), 71 pp.; New Jersey, Commissioners on the Plan of the Stevens Battery, *Report of the Commissioners...with a report of the engineer in charge* [George B. McClellan], (Trenton, 1870), 6 pp.; New Jersey, Commission Appointed to Effect the Sale of the Stevens Steam Battery, *The Stevens Iron-clad Battery* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1874), 46 pp.; *In Chancery of New Jersey. Petition, Papers & Notice of Motion for Sale of Stevens Battery* (Jersey City: M. Mullone, 1880); also a printed "Memorandum of the Claim of Robert L. Stevens against the United States" (Washington, January 32, 1851), 3 pp., in National Archives, Record Group 45, AC, Box 20.

United States government to construct an ironclad vessel utilizing plates thus preceded by sixteen years the launching of *La Gloire* in France.

The plan for the Stevens Battery was detailed in a letter of August 13, 1841, by Edwin Stevens at the request of the joint Navy-Army board. Stevens said that steam vessels of war should have the following capabilities: "That the motive power (so far as the steam is concerned), should be out of reach of an enemy's shot. That the vessel herself should be proof against damage from either shot or shell; that she should have the capability, when required, of great speed, combined with the power of choosing, under all circumstances, her position with facility and certainty."

Stevens planned to combine all these in one vessel. The engine and boilers were to be below the water line; and the boilers would be capable of working at high pressure to give greater power and speed when required. The Stevenses hoped to use a submerged propeller of their design, the Stevens Circular Scull, which had worked well in inland waterways.[16] Another departure is that Stevens initally did not plan any rigging.[17]

Above the water-line the battery would be constructed of shot- and shell-proof material "placed at such angle as should best resist or turn the one or the other." Where possible, iron was to be substituted for wood in the vessel's construction, "iron for ship-building being of less weight than wood, of equal strength, and capable of opposing an equal resistance." The Stevenses calculated that, if set at forty-five degrees, the armor thickness required would be one-half to two-thirds the diameter of the ball fired at it, or 4.5 or 6 inches to resist a 9-inch shell. They concluded from their experiments that "it would appear that it takes wood sixteen times the thickness of iron to offer the same resistance .... Four inches of wrought iron, therefore, would be equal five feet four inches of oak .... Whether this ratio would hold good when balls of the largest size were used, experiments easily made will prove. We believe it will."

The brothers proposed to arm the battery with "a few guns of the largest caliber (made of the same material as the one lately constructed by Capt. Stockton, viz., wrought-iron) ... throwing shot to a greater distance than any now in use." These would be breechloading rifled cannon capable of firing either shot or shell. The remainder of the battery would be of large-caliber shotguns "to throw a great weight of shot or shell at short distances."[18]

Later Stevens incorporated an underwater ram of the type ultimately fitted on the C.S.S. *Virginia* into the design. This was on the recommendation of Edwin Stevens, who noted that when one of the North River steamboats ran into a crib dock of 12-inch timbers filled with stone, the bow penetrated 15 feet into the structure but the boat was able to extract itself uninjured.[19]

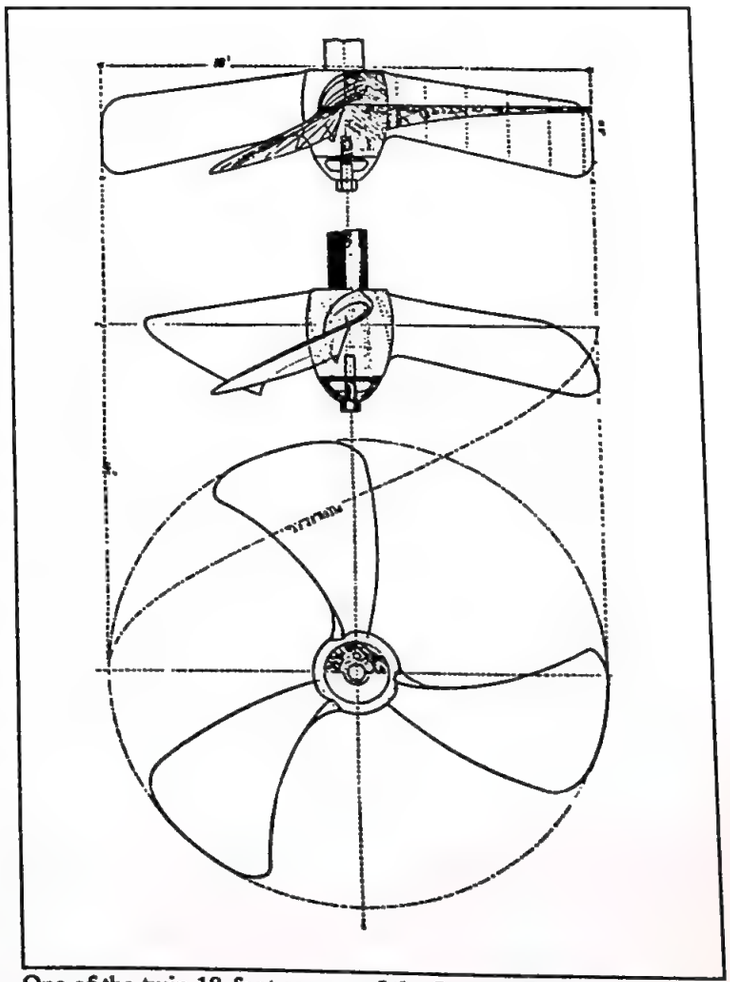
Robert Stevens planned the new steamer to be the fastest warship afloat. The ship would be constantly supplied with fresh air below decks by a forced air

16. Later the Stevens Circular Scull was incorporated into the revolutionary American warship *Princeton*.

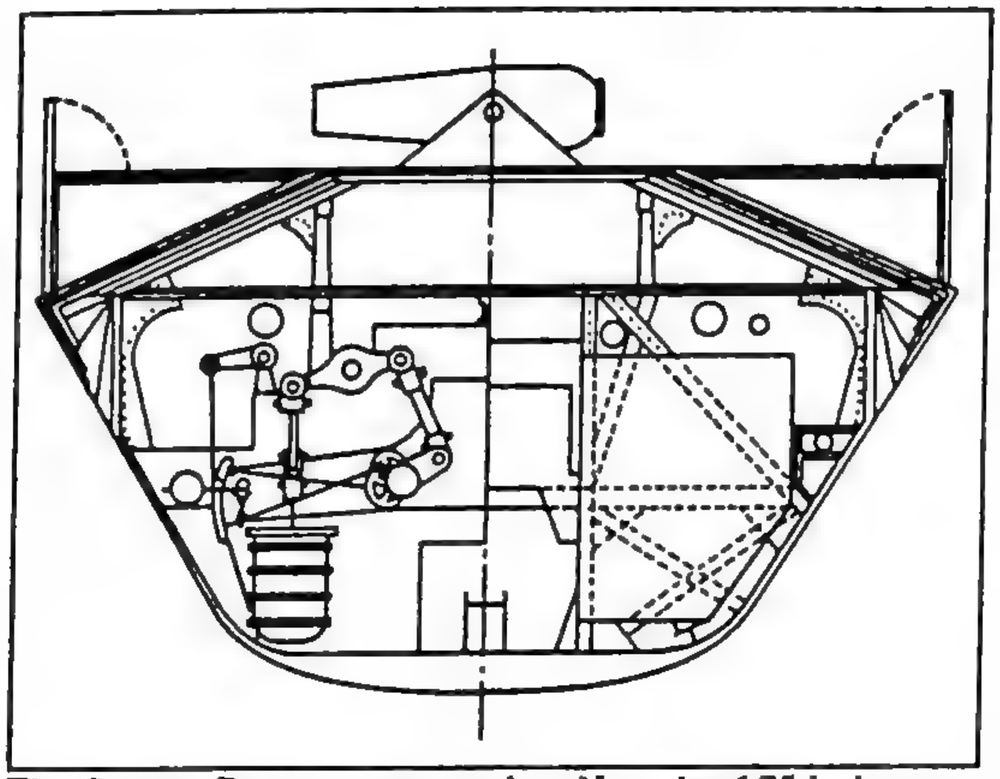
17. House Report No. 448, 27th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 12. By 1861, however, there were two short masts; these were hinged so that they might be lowered to the deck when going into action. House Executive Document No. 23, 37th Congress, 2d Session, p. 5.

18. The letter is in *The Scientific American*, 5, No. 9 (August 31, 1861): 129. See also Turnbull, *John Stevens*, pp. 415-417.

19. Turnbull, *John Stevens*, pp. 415-417.



One of the twin 18-foot screws of the Stevens Battery. From *The Stevens Iron Clad Battery*, 1874.



The Stevens Battery, cross section. Note the 6.75-inch armor belt, the solid oak in the V-shaped spaces at each side and the light side bulwarks, the upper portions of which were to fold down during battle. Courtesy of the Stevens Institute of Technology.

ventilation system. She would be powered by anthracite coal to minimize both smoke and sparks that might attract enemy attention. He estimated crew strength of the vessel at less than 150 men.[20]

The February 1843 contract between Robert Stevens and Secretary Upshur called for a vessel not less than 250 feet in length, 40 feet beam, 28 feet in depth amidships. She was to be "shot and shell proof against the artillery now in use on board vessels of War, viz. from 18 pounders to 64 pounders." Armor of 4.5-inch plates would taper off below the water line. She was to "be pierced for six or more guns," of "large dimensions designed principally for shells and to be of the same average value" as those in the *Missouri* or *Mississippi*. Her four boilers were to have fifty percent more heating surface than that of these two steam frigates, and four condensing steam engines would exceed those of the same ships by the same ratio. She was to develop 900 horsepower for her single propeller, and be faster than "any of our Steam vessels of war now built."[21] In her evolution, the Stevens Battery came to have scant resemblance to these specifications.

The difficulties of building the new warship were formidable and the whole process of construction seems reminiscent of many contemporary military contracts. For one thing, the start up costs were enormous. Stevens soon discovered that no construction facilities were available for the Battery and so he had to build a dry-dock at Hoboken at his own expense; when completed it had a steam engine, punching and drilling machines, and large pumps to keep it free from water. Also, the Battery represented a considerable technological advance; this created delays as ideas had to be tested and then modified (it should be noted that a good deal of this found its way into subsequent naval construction).[22] Further delays resulted from the fact that there were seven different secretaries of the navy between 1841 and 1850; most of them were not enthusiastic about the project, especially given the Navy's skepticism over ironclads and steamers and widespread resistance to change. All these factors caused work on the Battery to be suspended for long periods.

Supplies were collected and pattern making was in progress when, on December 22, 1843, construction was halted by Upshur's successor David Henshaw. On November 14, 1844, Stevens concluded a second contract with his successor, John Y. Mason. Stevens described it as "very full, minute, and particular" (indeed, it runs five pages). A supplemental contract, also with Mason, on December 14, provided for the completion of the Battery within two years of that date and set the total of $586,717.84 for the work.[23]

Even before construction could start there was a serious setback. The Swedish-born inventor John Ericsson arrived with his heavy wrought-iron 12-inch gun. The success of this gun (subsequently named the "Oregon") in smashing 4.5 inches of wrought iron, forced the Stevens brothers to increase the thickness of the Battery's armor to 6.75 inches, which meant vastly enlarging the ship to take the extra weight. This was a principal reason why it was never finished.[24]

Bills totaling $31,043.66 had been approved, when in December 1845 Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft ordered work halted; no further payments would be made on the project until Stevens submitted a detailed plan. Stevens claimed he had submitted both a general plan in 1843 and a detailed plan the next year. These apparently consisted of descriptive passages in the contracts rather

20. House Report No. 448, 27th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 12.

21. The full contract is reproduced in *The Stevens Ironclad Battery* and in Senate Executive Document No. 34, 37th Congress, 2d Session, pp. 1-3.

22. Senate Executive Document No. 129, 32d Congress, 1st Session, p. 2.

23. Baxter, *The Introduction of the Ironclad Warship*, pp. 50-51; Robert L. Stevens, *Memorial of the Claim of Robert L. Stevens against the United States*, p. 1; *The Stevens Ironclad Battery*. The full contract is in Senate Executive Document No. 34, 37th Congress, 2d Session, pp. 3-7.

24. Church, *The Life of John Ericsson*, I, 153-154; and II, 116-117; and Bennett, *The* Monitor *and the Navy under Steam*, pp. 27-29.

than plans of the sort Bancroft wanted. There is no record of any detailed plans submitted by Stevens.[25] Under considerable stress, Stevens fell ill and went to Europe on the advice of his doctor. In September 1846 John Mason returned as Secretary of the Navy. In January 1847, Stevens wrote to him and requested additional time to complete the Battery; and on September 9, 1848, Stevens and Mason renewed the contract with four years' extension.[26] Confident of real progress, Stevens went back to Europe to purchase materials, leaving his brother in charge of the construction. However, Mason retired in 1849, and in August another Secretary of the Navy, William B. Preston, again halted payments. In his annual report on December 1, Preston noted that "no precise plan has yet been submitted by the contractor to the department, and no progress has been made in the construction of the vessel beyond the purchase and delivery of certain quantities of iron."[27] Stevens was forced to return from Europe. When he learned that Preston considered the contract void and was proposing to sell the Battery along with all materials, Stevens appealed to Congress.

Stevens pointed out the heavy start-up costs, including the workshops and the need to construct a small trial steamer as well as numerous "experiments to test the quality of materials, and to improve the character of the propeller." Meanwhile, the halt in payments had left him personally liable for some $30,000 in heavy iron plates and boiler tubes contracted for in England.[28]

Senator Stockton's report from the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs on March 16, 1852, entirely supported Stevens' "Memorial," and defended the ironclad as "that very sort of war-steamer which the service requires." The report urged completion of the steamer "without any unecessary delay."[29] In a speech before the Senate on May 11, Stockton said that there was a real threat of war in Europe, with the danger the United States might be drawn in. New York harbor was vulnerable and the Stevens battery, "being shot and bomb proof, could do more to resist the progress of hostile fleets than twenty forts."[30] A clause in the August 31, 1852, Naval Appropriation Act authorized the secretary of the navy "to have completed with least possible delay, the war steamer contracted for with Robert L. Stevens ... and the balance of the appropriation heretofore made, which has been carried to the credit of the surplus fund, shall be used for that purpose."[31]

Work now went forward, although it was not until 1854 that the floor timbers were laid. In October of that year there were five hundred men at work on the Battery.[32] On March 3, 1855, Congress authorized a second $250,000 in the naval appropriations for the year ending June 30, 1856,[33] all of which had been spent by December 14 of the same year.[34] On August 16, 1856, Congress approved $86,817.84 for the Battery, but there is no record of this money ever being paid to Stevens or that it was expended on the vessel.[35] On the death of Robert Stevens, all work came to a halt at the end of 1856. This was three years before the launching of *La Gloire* in France.

Edwin Stevens still hoped to complete the Battery. In a letter to Congress at the end of 1856, he defended changes in the design of the Battery as necessary to meet worldwide advances in the size of warships and their armaments. In 1842 the heaviest gun in common use had been an 8-inch firing a 64-lb. shot; in 1856 guns were in use at sea that fired shot of 172 pounds. Although the principles of the Battery's construction remained unchanged, these heavier armaments had forced an increase in its size. Stevens compared the original design

25. Robert Stevens, *Memorandum of the Claim of Robert L. Stevens against the United States*, pp. 1-2. John Lenthall, Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair, reported on May 18, 1860, that "the records of this Bureau do not show that any plans of explanations further than named in the contract were furnished by the Contractor." John Lenthall to Secretary Isaac Toucey, May 18, 1860, *Bureau Letters*. See also letter from Charles W. Skinner, Bureau of Construction, Equipment, and Repair to Secretary of the Navy William B. Preston, August 17, 1849, in Report of the Secretary of the Navy, Senate Executive Documents, 31st Congress, 1st Session, p. 446.

26. Senate Executive Document No. 34, 37th Congress, 2d Session, p. 10; Robert Stevens, *Memorandum of the Claim of Robert L. Stevens against the United States*, p. 2.

27. Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy, Senate Executive Document No. 5, 31st Congress, 1st Session, p. 434.

28. Robert Stevens, *Memorandum of the Claim of Robert L. Stevens against the United States*, p. 2; Senate Executive Document No. 129, 32nd Congress, 1st Session, p. 3.

29. Senate Report No. 129, 32d Congress, 1st Session.

30. *The Scientific American*, 7, No. 6 (August 9, 1862): 90.

31. *Statutes at Large*, 10, p. 101.

32. Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy, December 4, 1854, 33rd Congress, 2nd Session, 1854-1855, p. 402.

33. *Statutes at Large*, 10, p. 676.

34. Payments totalling $500,000 appear to have been made from January 5, 1845 to December 14, 1855. Senate Executive Document No. 34, 37th Congress, 2d Session, p. 11; and "Outline of Navy History of the Stevens War Steamer," National Archives, RG45, AC, Box 20-1.

35. *Statutes at Large*, 11, p. 48. Also "Outline of Navy History of Stevens War Steamer."

with that of 1856 as follows:

| Contract | 1843 | 1856 |
|---|---|---|
| Length | 250 ft. | 415 ft. |
| Beam | 40 ft. | 48 ft. |
| Depth amidship | 28 ft. | 32 ft. 4 in. |
| Protection against gunfire | 4.5 in. | 6.75 in. |
| Boilers | 4 | 10 |
| Engines, condensing | 4+ | 10 |
| Horsepower | 900 | 8624 |
| Propellers | 1 | 2 |
| Shafts | 1 | 2 |
| Auxiliary engines | 2 | 9 |

Although some of the construction delay was attributable to design changes initiated by his brother, Edwin Stevens placed primary blame on government-ordered halts in construction. He also claimed that, through the end of 1856, only $387,000 had been spent out of the $500,000 in Congressional appropriations. He noted that he and his brother had spent $173,570.11 of their own money on the project, not including rent, taxes, or expenses for land. If funds were provided, he could complete the Battery in only a year.[36] However, a board appointed in February 1856 concluded in its report on March 7, that in addition to the $500,000 already expended, an additional $812,033.68 would be required.[37]

For years the Battery was hidden from public view behind a high-board fence at Hoboken. Not until the Civil War was public interest in it revived because of articles in *The New York World* and *Scientific American*. In February 1861 *The New York World* sent in a reporter to write a story on the Battery, and on July 26, the same paper editorialized about how, if the Battery had been ready, it might have reprovisioned Fort Sumter. The editors called for its completion, if only for the defense of Union harbors (i.e. New York), then lying unprotected against what was thought be the possibility of imminent attack by Confederate ironclads.[38]

A month later a illustrated article of several pages on the Battery appeared in *The Scientific American*. This extolled its virtues and noted that "No marine structure but the *Great Eastern*[39] has so excited the curiosity of the American public as the Stevens Battery, not so much by reason of its supposed vastness, or its impregnable or destructive or any other specially defined features, as from the mystery that has ever hung over its origin, character, size, appearance, destination, and perhaps its very existence." The work on the Battery had been accomplished in just twenty months beginning in 1854, and "All that is asked of the government now is $500,000 more, which will complete the armor in a very short time, as this is a kind of work which can be rapidly pushed forward by an army of men."

The article described the battery as 420 feet long, 53 feet wide, 23.5 feet in depth, and of 6,000 tons displacement. Four steam engines on each of her twin shafts developed steam pressure of 80 pounds. Total horsepower was estimated at 8,000, equal to that of the *Great Eastern*. With one screw backing and the other going forward, the vessel could be turned in one minute. The stroke of the engines was short, only 42 inches, and the cylinders were 45 inches in diameter. Her ventilation was "perfect" with a forced blower to keep the engine room cool. All principal compartments and decks were airtight.

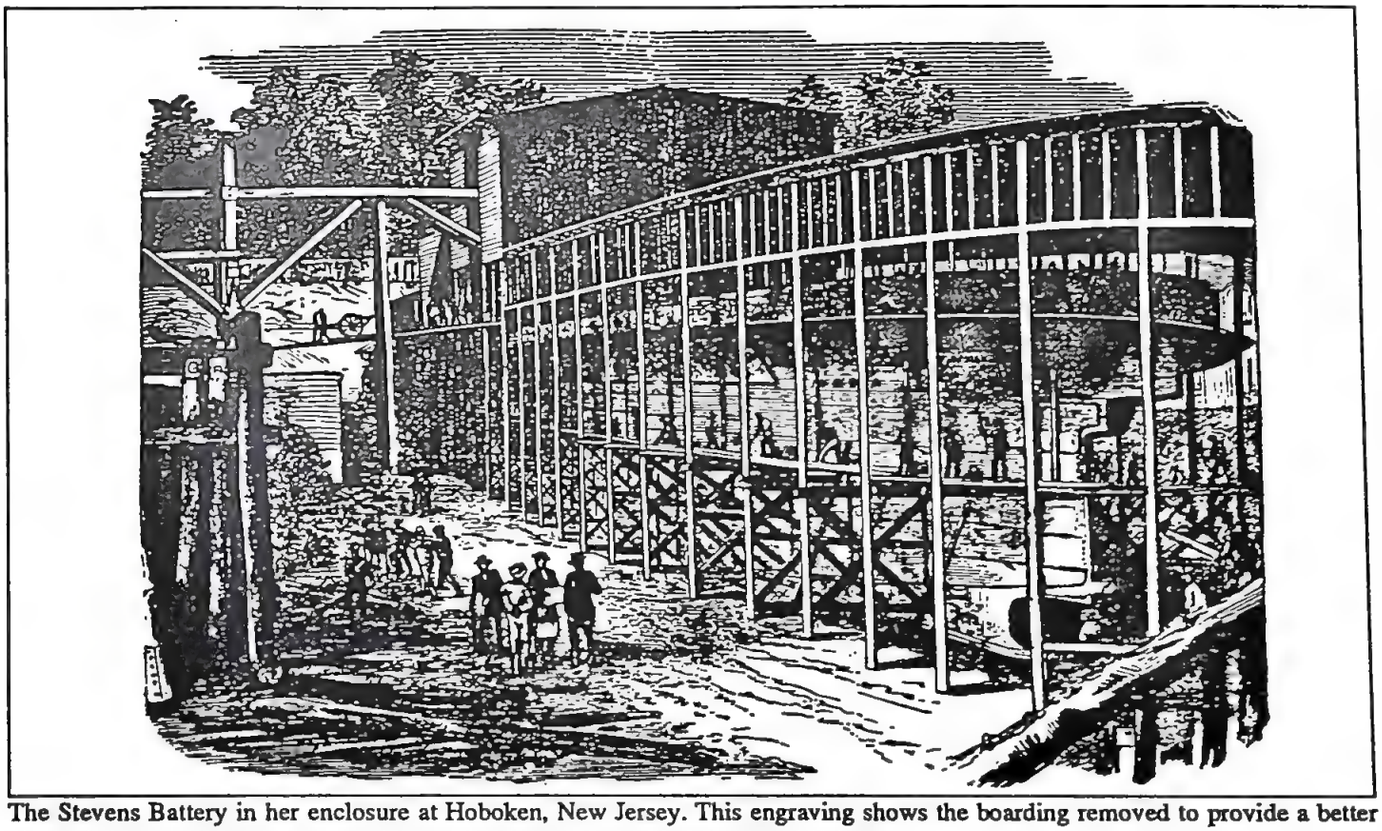
The Battery would have the advantage of a very low silhouette. The bores of her eight guns were only eight feet above the water, and her highest point — with the exception of the smoke stack — was only ten feet above the waterline. The armored sides at a 30-degree angle were reminiscent of the casemate style of the *Merrimack*. Her armor belt started where the sides of the ship began to rise vertically, and solid oak filled the V-shaped spaces on each side between the armor and the side of the ship. A 6.75-inch armor belt protected the gun deck, shotproof loading houses, and all the inclined parts. The main deck was also armor plated to the extent to keep out shells;

36. E. A. Stevens to Secretary of the Navy J. C. Dobbin, December 22, 1856, in Baxter, *Introduction of the Ironclad Warship*, p. 213.

37. House Executive Document No. 23, 37th Congress, 2d Session, p. 8.

38. *The New York World*, July 26, 1861. The editorial is reproduced in full in Tumbull, *John Stevens*, p. 425.

39. The *Great Eastern* was perhaps the best known steamship ever built. Built in Great Britain, she was an immense 692 feet in length on her upper deck, and 82.5 in beam; her draught was 30 feet and she weighed 18,914 tons. The *Great Eastern* had two paddle wheels and a 4-blade screw propeller, as well as six masts to spread 6,500 square yards of sail. Originally designed for service between Britain and either Calcutta or Colombo, she was used on the North Atlantic run. She was perhaps best known for her work in laying the Atlantic cable.



The Stevens Battery in her enclosure at Hoboken, New Jersey. This engraving shows the boarding removed to provide a better view of the vessel from the stern. From *The Stevens Iron Clad Battery*, 1874.

solid shot would strike at such an acute angle as to glance off. Extending from the sides were light bulwarks, the upper sections of which would turn down during action. Not part of the vessel proper and not armored, these were considered a temporary arrangement for peacetime to be "vacated and carried away in action."

The Battery was to have two batteries of four guns and two loading houses each. The four midships guns were to be 10- or 12-inch rifled cannon; the four others were to be the largest that could be produced, probably 15- to 18-inch guns. All were to be capable of firing to either side, an innovation since most warships of the time relied on broadsides armament in which only one-half the guns fought at a time. The gun carriages were to be solid masses of iron, capable of resisting any known projectiles at short range. Each carriage was a turn-table on a shaft turned by men immediately below who would be protected from enemy fire. By this point the original plan for breechloading guns had been abandoned; after it fired, the gun was to be turned with its muzzle facing a small port in the loading house so that it could be reloaded. The only man "not absolutely protected from enemy fire" was the one aiming and firing the gun, and he was shielded by the gun and carriage. Recoil was to be absorbed by "rubber or other elastic substances" placed behind the trunnions of the gun. In effect, the plan was to have guns heavy enough to protect themselves, obviating the need for armor protection, such as the turret developed by Captain Coles in England.

The Battery was to have a minimum draft of 16 feet. When preparing for battle she was to take in water ballast and sink to 21 feet, or even, in smooth water, to her gun deck. This meant that the bulk of the vessel would be protected by water, as in Ericsson's monitors. This allowed considerable savings in weight and the Battery's speed was estimated above 20 knots.

The article ended on this positive note:

> In conclusion it will be observed that most of the best features of modern marine practice and naval defence were 20 years ago embodied in the designs of this vessel, viz.: high steam, the screw propeller, hollow and fine water-lines fore and aft, the iron hull, the box or tubular-bridge framing, the link-motion and steam reverse gear and inclined armor. The improvements designed at that early day, and not yet adopted in the best practice — still ahead of the times — are the two screws for rapid turning, the water-armor during action,

gunwale, made the Battery 22 feet in depth (two feet deeper than before). She was to be 390 feet in length between perpendiculars with a beam of 45-feet. New engines and machinery were also installed, capable of propelling her at 16.5 knots. All efforts to sell her, "with hull and machinery nearly completed," were unsuccessful, however, and the $1,000,000 was expended without her being completed.[50]

Finally, in 1881 the Battery was broken up and sold as scrap. One account noted that the Battery was so strongly built that explosives had to be used to break her apart, "the work being done at night without notice to prevent neighboring householders getting injunctions."[51]

Because the Stevens Battery was never completed, speculation as to her capabilities are probably an idle exercise. Nonetheless, her chief strengths in service probably would have been low silhouette, armor, speed, and turning power. In the last two categories she would have been superior to any other contemporary warships. Principal liabilities would have been exposed ordnance, heavy topside weight,[52] vulnerability in bad weather, and lack of significant coal storage capacity (hence limited range).

James Baxter concluded that there is no evidence that the Stevens Battery had much influence on the introduction of ironclads by either France or Britain, but the editors of the *Scientific American* felt otherwise, noting that the London *Quarterly Review* gave Robert Stevens credit for awakening European interest in ironclad ships, and even Baxter noted that the English inventor and naval constructor Scott Russell became an advocate of ironclads after meeting with Stevens during his trips to Europe in the 1840s.[53]

The Stevens Battery does provide a useful lesson in defense procurement. As we continue to rediscover today, it often makes sense to complete a trial weapons system quickly without design changes, and then test it. If this had been done the Battery would have been a useful laboratory for subsequent improved construction.

50. *The Stevens Ironclad Battery* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1874), pp. 4-8. K. Jack Bauer, *Ships of the Navy, 1775-1969* (Troy, New York: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 1969) 1, p. 75.

51. Frank C. Bowen, *The Sea: Its History and Romance* 4 (New York: R.M. McBride, 1927), p. 10. The 1881 date comes from Baxter, *The Introduction of the Ironclad Warship*, p. 219. Bauer says she was sold on the ways in 1880. Bauer, *Ships of the Navy*, 1, p. 75.

52. The Board reporting on her on December 24, 1861, noted that the Battery's armament was projected as five 15-inch Rodman guns, weighing with their carriages 60,000 pounds each, and two 10-inch rifled guns, each weighing, with its carriage, 40,000 lbs. Ericsson, for one, predicted that all this, and the armor, would cause her to "turn round, like a barrel, in the water with a weight attached to its *intended* top." Baxter, *Introduction of the Ironclad Warship*, p. 254.

53. Baxter, *Introduction of the Ironclad Warship*, p. 54; *The Scientific American*, February 12, 1861.

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# Rear Admiral William A. Moffett, USN, and the Bureau of Aeronautics

PAOLO E. COLETTA

ALTHOUGH he rejected the title of "Father of U.S. Naval Aviation," which he held belonged to Captain Henry C. Mustin, William Adjer Moffett accepted that of "Father of Aircraft Carrier Doctrine." This was because as the Director of Naval Aviation, 1920-1921, and Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, 1921 until his death in 1933, he fought strenuously for carriers and the aircraft needed for them and for other purposes as well. In addition, at both the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-22 and the London Naval Conference of 1930 he led other representatives to agree that surface ships and submarines could be limited but not aircraft. The efficiency of his carriers and planes was proved during fleet exercises held between 1925 and 1932, when the planes "bombed" both the Panama Canal and Pearl Harbor. Did he therefore show the Japanese how they could bomb Pearl Harbor?

Moffett was born on 31 October 1869 in Charleston, South Carolina, to Captain George Hall Moffett, a Confederate veteran, and Elizabeth H. Simonton. The fourth son and seventh child, he was raised largely by his mother because when he was only six years old his father was killed in an accident. A woman of "strong and noble character," she impressed upon him that he should always act with judgment and according to a strict code of conduct. As an uncle, George Moffett, recalled, "he lived here a normal boy's life, hunting, fishing, and boating."[1] He attended a Presbyterian Sunday School and church and the local elementary and high schools. During his junior year of high school, when he was sixteen years of age, he decided to take the competitive examinations for the Naval Academy, about which he learned from the *Charleston News and Courier*. With an uncle overcoming his mother's opposition, he studied hard during the eighteen days he had prior to taking the examinations, given at the high school on 30 July 1886. He passed with top honors and on 21 August arrived in Annapolis. Although a Southerner, he did not wear secession on his sleeve, and he never showed racial bias.

After graduating from the Naval Academy in 1890,[2] Moffett served for thirty years in various ships and at shore stations overseas and at home. He was in the cruiser *Charleston*, on her way to the Philippines during the Spanish-American War, when she obtained the bloodless surrender of the Spanish island of Guam. Admiral George Dewey, commanding in Manila Bay, assigned Moffett duty as captain of the port, his major task being to salvage Spanish ships sunk in the Battle of Manila Bay.

Only five and one-half feet tall, Moffett was not a star athlete but kept in good physical condition. In July 1902 he married Jeannette Beverly Whitton and by 1918 had sired seven children. A twin died at birth; daughter Elizabeth, before the days of antibiotics, died of pneumonia in 1928 when seventeen years old. Moffett's was a truly Navy family, for his three sons became naval aviators and his two remaining daughters married naval officers. While Mrs. Moffett taught her children, especially her daughters, the facts of life, their father instilled in them the values of honesty, integrity, and hard work, and how to take care of household pets. For serious misdeeds he administered corporal punishment. As an officer he was patient and diplomatic and worked within the naval system even if he called conservative seniors "whales" and "fussbuddies." He liked action, color, and a bit of noise. A noted raconteur, he rarely cursed and never told a

1. George Moffett [W.A. Moffett's brother] to George Hall Moffett [W.A. Moffett's eldest son], June 17, 1948, William A. Moffett Papers, Special Collections, Nimitz Library, U.S. Naval Academy; John Adger Law, *Adger-Law Ancestral Notebook* (Spartanburg, S.C., 1936), courtesy of Helen Moffett, widow of George H. Moffett.

2. Moffett's career at the Naval Academy can be followed in his "Naval Cadet Diaries," pp. 22-29, Moffett Papers, and the monthly reports of his grades in each subject in National Archives Record Group 405 and in *Conduct Book* (Annapolis, U.S. Naval Academy Archives) for the years 1886-1890.

smutty tale. He had a pre-dinner manhattan or two even during prohibition days. A pipe smoker, he burned more matches than tobacco and often used his pipestem to jab a point across. For relaxation he read mystery stories, particularly those of Agatha Christie.

Moffett's leadership followed the dictum "for the good of the ship," meaning that he assigned men to billets for which they were best fitted and expected them to work for the success of the organization rather than for their own happiness. He had the knack of tapping the enthusiasm, energy, and expertise of his people. He trusted subordinates to handle details while he concentrated upon broad policies. He loyally backed his men unless they fouled up, whereupon he got rid of them. His men in turn loyally backed him up. He also held that "cooperative competitive coexistence is in the blood of the mariner."[3] By following this precept he won many efficiency awards for his ships not only in engineering and gunnery but in athletics as well.

Moffett first saw aircraft operate during the winter of 1912, when the Atlantic Fleet concentrated off Guantanamo, Cuba. In April 1914 he saw Lieutenant Patrick N.L. Bellinger make reconnaissance flights that provided intelligence about Mexican sea and land forces about Veracruz. For his superb seamanship and gunnery during the American investiture of that port city he was awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor. For his training of many thousands of bluejackets, including naval aviation personnel at the Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Illinois, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. His repeated requests to be sent to duty overseas during the Great War were declined "for the good of the service."[4]

In 1919 Moffett commanded the battleship *Mississippi*, which carried spotter aircraft. His greatly heightened interest in reforming naval aviation organization came about for three main reasons. First, he was given the runaround by the Office of Chief of Naval operations (CNO) and the bureaus involved in aviation when he sought information about catapults. Second, he was urged by many naval aviation pioneers to become a candidate for the billet of chief of a Bureau of Aeronautics, which they predicted would soon be established. Last, he realized that aircraft carriers would be the best weapons system with which to carry a war across the Pacific to Japan,

Moffett as a midshipman, courtesy of the U.S. Naval Academy Archives.

America's most likely potential enemy.[5] Knowing of his diplomatic skills and expertise in public relations, on 7 March 1920 the CNO, Admiral Robert E. Coontz, billetted him as the Director of Naval Aviation (DNA), his task being to develop aviation into a "proper sphere in the Navy Department."[6]

3. Eugene E. Wilson, "Sailor's Choice," *Trident* 31 (March, 1956): 10-11.

4. Francis Buzzell, *The Great Lakes Naval Training Station* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1919); John Philip Sousa, *Marching Along: Recollections of John Philip Sousa* (Boston: Hale, Cushman, and Flint, 1941).

5. "The Reminiscences of Eugene E. Wilson," transcript of oral interview by John T. Mason (New York: Columbia University Oral History Program, 1962), p. 159; Admiral Joseph J. Clark, with Clark G. Reynolds, *Carrier Admiral* (New York: David McKay, 1967), p. 36.

6. Robert E. Coontz, *From the Mississippi to the Sea* (Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1930), pp. 408-9.

As the DNA, Moffett learned that he could not make his wants known to a bureau chief except through the CNO, who could not legally give orders to the bureaus, which handled aviation as they did ships. No ranking naval leader was an aviator, and the General Board of the Navy had only advisory powers. Nor was there a naval agency devoted to the scientific study of aviation.

The Great War had called largely for flying boats for antisubmarine warfare (ASW) and convoy escort. Moffett's best options were to employ large, tender-based seaplanes from combatant ships for scouting and gunfire spotting, and to use wheeled aircraft from a flight deck carrier. As the saying went, "We won't be able to get a plane until we get a ship, and we cannot design a ship without a plane."[7] On 11 July 1919 Congress authorized the conversion of a collier into the experimental aircraft carrier *Langley*. Now aircraft could be designed for it. In addition, during the winter of 1919, tender-based flying boats were integrated with the fleet and a beginning was made in fitting catapults and planes to battleships. In 1920, scout, observation, fighter, and torpedo-bomber planes began reaching the fleet.

Because senior officers viewed naval aviators as having but a minor role in the fleet, in which the battleship was the prime index of naval power, Moffett faced severe personnel as well as material problems. He could recommend the assignment, training, qualification, and promotion of aviation personnel, but authority to enact his recommendations had to come from the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation (BuNav). The pioneer aviators were too junior to influence the determination of aviation policy. There was also the requirement that aviators, being line officers, serve satisfactorily for two years in grade at sea before they could be selected for promotion, with the sea tours greatly lowering their flying proficiency. Further, some of them wanted to create a Naval Aviation Corps similar in status to the Marine Corps. Having lived through a generation of animosity between engineers and line officers before they were amalgamated in 1899, Moffett objected to a Corps because its members might give it rather than the Navy their loyalty. Still other aviators preferred a Bureau of Aeronautics.[8]

Drastic and swift demobilization followed the end of the Great War, when Congress severely cut defense funding. Fortunately for Moffett, Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels and particularly the Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair (BuC&R), the brilliant Rear Admiral David W. Taylor, sought a Bureau of Aeronautics that would foster cooperation with the other bureaus. Such a bureau would also help to carry out the decision of 1920 by the Joint Army and Navy Board; in brief, Army aviation would operate from land but naval aircraft operating from shore stations or mobile floating bases would scout at sea and, in wartime, attack enemy ships and shore installations, provide convoy escort, and engage in trade protection. On the technical side, a beginning was made to build aircraft out of a new metal alloy, duralumin, rather than of wood, wire, fabric, and glue. Lastly, American naval officers were in England learning how to fly home a purchased rigid airship. Parts for a second airship were being built at the Naval Air Factory (NAF) in Philadelphia; these would be assembled at the naval air station at Lakehurst, New Jersey.

Meanwhile, Commander Jerome C. Hunsaker (CC) USN, gave Admiral Taylor a draft of legislation to create a Naval Aviation Corps and a Bureau of Aeronautics. Representative Frederick C. Hicks, a member of the House Naval Affairs Committee, changed it so that it called for a bureau only.[9] The decision now lay with the Republican victors in the elections of 1920.

On 25 April 1921, Moffett told Hicks' committee that aviation problems were caused by the lack of centralized authority and that much time was lost in obtaining what he needed by having to go through the CNO or through bureau officers with much other work to do and little interest in aviation. A bureau would eliminate delay and "the interest of economy demands that chaotic conditions now obtaining be systematized.[10] With aviation important to agencies outside the military as well as to the services themselves, the Harding administration on 31 March 1921 called into conference representatives from the War, Navy, and Post Office departments, the Army Air Service, and the director of the Bureau of Standards. The result was a request from President Harding that the chairman of the National Advisory Committee on Aviation organize a subcommittee from all government agencies concerned

7. Captain Steven U. Ramsdell, "Victory Winning Team," *Naval Aviation News* 72 (Nov.-Dec. 1989):25.

8. Paolo E. Coletta, *Patrick N.L. Bellinger and U.S. Naval Aviation* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), pp. 126-27; "The Reminiscences of Rear Admiral George van Deurs USN (Ret.), 2 vols., transcript of oral interview by Commander Etta Belle Kitchen, USN (Ret.) (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1974), 1:53-54; Captain Thomas T. Craven, USN, "Director of Naval Aviation," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 79 (March 1953):299.

9. Taylor to Emory Scott Land, May 14, 1920, Emory Scott Land Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; Hunsaker to Lieutenant C.L. Lord, USNR, Jan. 22, 1941, Hunsaker Papers, (Washington: Naval Aviation History Office); *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy, 1920* (Washington: GPO, 1920), pp. 52-55.

10. "Navy Bureau of Aeronautics Hearings," *Army and Navy Journal* 58 (April, 1920):959.

and recommend legislation on both civil and service aviation and on how the aircraft industry could expand in time of emergency. Harding, who at first favored an independent air force but then changed his mind, approved the report, which called for air bureaus in the Navy and Commerce Departments. Hicks provided the needed bills.[11]

Now intruded Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell, USA, who returned home in early January 1919 from a very successful tour in command of Army aviation in wartime Europe and obsessed with the value of strategic bombing. Alleging that air power had won the war and would soon make armies and navies obsolete except for submarines, he demanded before Congress and in the press the creation of an independent air force run by aviators. Were he to obtain his objective, naval aviation would be denied the special organization, administration, training, operations, and research and development it needed. To Mitchell's discomfiture, Army generals wanted Army air to remain under their control and held that their airmen needed discipline rather than independence. Mitchell then sought to prove his ideas by calling for aerial bombing tests against warships. Anxious to learn from such tests, Navy leaders provided the rules for holding them. On 20 and 21 July 1921, Mitchell violated the rules and sank the former German battleship *Ostfriesland*, which was anchored and undefended by her own guns or friendly aircraft. While he had spoiled the tests for the Navy, his sinking of a battleship, as he claimed he could, greatly excited the public and caused some naval witnesses to cry and sob.[12] "The lesson of the exercise," Moffett concluded, "is that we must put planes on battleships and get carriers quickly.... We must get aviators on all our battleships and enable them to be ready to ward off air bombing attacks in the event of war, pending the time we get aircraft carriers."[13]

Meanwhile Lieutenant Commander Richard E. Byrd, Moffett's liaison man with Congress, had also drafted a bill creating a naval Bureau of Aeronautics. After winning support for it from both Congressional naval committees he managed to have it added as an amendment to the naval appropriations bill. On 12 July 1921, the bureau was approved. Another amendment called for officers assigned to it to qualify as pilots or observers within a year. Thus the bureau was created even before Mitchell cheated on the *Ostfriesland* tests. Promoted to rear admiral, the first air admiral in the Navy, Moffett became chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics (BuAer) on 25 July for a four year term. BuAer stood institutionally on par with the rest of the Navy. Naval aviation would no longer suffer from organizational neglect, and the creation of BuAer reflected the importance the Navy placed on it.[14]

Moffett's duties comprised "all that related to the design, fitting out, and preparing Naval and Marine Corps aircraft." He thus controlled the activities of the NAF, naval experimental station at Annapolis, Maryland, and helium production. Moreover, he furnished "information covering all aeronautic planning, operations, and administration that may be called for by the CNO." He thus became the CNO's major aviation advisor. Moffett also controlled purchasing, and he supervised the construction, design, and installation of equipment provided by other bureaus. However, while he could recommend the detail of aviation personnel, orders still had to be issued by BuNav, which treated aviators as the line officers they were and would give them no preference because they were specialists. Nevertheless, with naval aviators placated by the creation of BuAer, they were tied closely and firmly to the Navy; they now had a voice in the determination of their destinies and would have no part of Mitchell's independent air force. Thus occurred "the most important intra-Navy development arising from the aviation issue in the decades between the two wars."[15]

Moffett provided an organizational chart for his bureau but his "for the good of the ship" brand of leadership often made him disregard it. Instead, he would choose the right man to undertake a particular task and let

11. "Cooperation in Aviation Activities," *Army and Navy Register* 69 (April 16, 1921):354; "Aeronautics Committee Report," *Army and Navy Journal* 58 (April 23, 1921):935.

12. Burke Davis, *The Billy Mitchell Affair* (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 53; Alfred R. Hurley, *Billy Mitchell: Crusader for Air Power* (1964, reprinted Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), pp. 49-50; Charles M. Melhorn, *Two-Block Fox: The Rise of the Aircraft Carrier, 1911-1929* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1974), pp. 40-45; Archibald D. Turnbull and Clifford L. Lord, *History of United States Naval Aviation* (1949, reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1972), pp. 178-84, 201.

13. Interview with Admiral Moffett, n.d., Moffett Papers; *The New York Times*, July 22, 1921, p. 12.

14. Ramsdell, "Victory Winning Team," p. 24; "Flying Officer for Chief of Bureau," *Army and Navy Journal* 58 (May 21, 1921):1053, and "New Naval Bureau of Aeronautics," Ibid., 58 (July 21, 1921):118.

15. Vincent Davis, *The Admirals Lobby* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), pp. 76-77. See also Richard E. Byrd, *Skyward* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), pp. 108-9. Among the many other congratulatory messages Moffett received on his appointment was one from his South Carolina friend, the retired Rear Admiral Samuel McGowan, who wrote that no writeup about him could do him justice "because there's a great big human side to you that they don't know about and couldn't fitly put into words if they did. But I know and our other close friends know, and that's why we on the inside feel cause to congratulate the *Navy* and the *Country* on your appointment." McGowan to Moffett, July 24, 1921, Moffett Papers.

loyalty flow down as well as up the line. In weekly conferences with his division heads he decided what needed to be done; at those he could not attend, disagreements were left "for the Admiral's decision." His biggest task was to have naval aviation go to sea on the back of the fleet. To do so he had to bring together ships carrying aircraft, planes, and pilots while also applying to aviation a technology undergoing a fantastic revolution. Between 1917 and 1925, ninety modifications were made to the DeHavilland (DH) plane alone. Meanwhile, his operations were subject to criticism by fleet commanders and other often jealous bureau chiefs.

Moffett fought hard for appropriations from Republican administrations devoted to "pitiless economy" and strictly enforced by the federal budget system adopted in 1921. He never obtained even 10 percent of the naval budget for aircraft carriers. In any event, at the age of fifty-two years, with his ruddy complexion making him look younger even though his hair was turning white, on 27 March 1922 he created and enrolled in the naval aviation observer course in Pensacola. After qualifying on 17 June, he was able to perform every flight function except piloting. When someone remarked that his flight pay made him the highest paid admiral in the Navy, he quipped that he had not written the law.[16]

To stimulate Congress to be generous to naval aviation and to counter the publicity programs of Army men and pacifists, Moffett either attended or sent representatives to participate in the opening of commercial airports, air shows, and races. He and others lectured to aviation congresses, chambers of commerce, and to the Naval War College. He published many articles on aircraft and rigid airships and also warmly welcomed visiting aerial explorers, commercial airline officials, aircraft manufacturers, and civilian female and male pilots.

Within six months of his becoming the Chief of BuAer, Moffett's aviation program as well as American naval and foreign policies were greatly affected by the Washington Conference of November 1921 - February 1922. The Five Power Naval Disarmament Treaty made it impossible for the United States to enforce other treaties dealing with the maintenance of the status quo in the Pacific and defense of China's integrity. The capital ship tonnage of Great Britain, the United States, Japan, France, and Italy was set at a maximum of 525,000 tons at a ratio of 5-5-3-1.75-1.75 respectively. Many ships had to be scrapped, and the United States could apply elsewhere funds not used to complete its huge 1916 building program. Replacements for capital ships could be made only a decade later. Aircraft carrier tonnage was set at 135,000 tons with the same ratios.[17] As chairman of an aviation committee of the Conference, Moffett reported that aviation could not be limited.[18] He also demanded that two battle cruiser hulls of the 1916 program be converted to 33,000-ton fast fleet carriers.

Given her small ratio in capital ships and carriers, Japan was placated by the (in)-famous Article XIX: the British could not fortify anything east of Singapore and the United States nothing west of Hawaii. Those who believed that the Conference had ushered in the true peace millennium erred, for carrier tonnage agreed upon was the harbinger of a new dimension of seapower. Moffett saw that carriers could serve as the advance bases denied the United States in Article XIX. On the other hand, the United States had yielded a possible future naval supremacy unless Congress kept the Navy up to treaty limits, which it did not do. Moreover, the United States lost power to defend its insular Pacific possessions.

Lacking carriers, Moffett sent aviation to sea on fleet ships. In 1922 he provided improved turntable catapults and aircraft to battleships and acquired his first true aircraft tender, the *Wright*. With two fleet carriers, the *Lexington* and the *Saratoga*, being built, five aircraft tenders, and an airship tender, he thought that he could undertake a cross-Pacific campaign in time of war. On 16 August 1922, moreover, he proposed to the General Board a five-year aircraft building program that would provide a thousand planes. In consequence, in some cases until 1928, he had to use often dangerous wartime surplus planes. Nevertheless, by the end of 1922 he had integrated aviation with the fleet and also made progress in his Lighter-than-Air (LTA) program.[19]

By 1922, with the aircraft industry on the verge of extinction, its leaders charged that it suffered in great part because of the work of Moffett's NAF. Moffett retorted that they could not build flying boats to his specifications. Therefore, the NAF assembled a few of them from parts

16. Byrd, *Skyward*, p. 109.

17. On the Washington Conference, see U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, *Limitation and Reduction of Naval Armament*, 71st Congress, 2nd Session, Report No. 1080 (Washington:GPO, 1922), pp. 850-1568; Roger Dingman, *Power in the Pacific: The Origins of Naval Arms Limitation, 1914-1922* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), and Thomas H. Buckley, *The United States and the Washington Conference, 1921-1922* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980).

18. Washington Conference, *Subcommittee of Naval Advisors: Subcommittee on Aircraft* (Washington: GPO, 1922).

19. Moffett to CNO, March 11, 1922, and to the Secretary of the Navy, Oct. 1, 1923, Moffett Papers; "Naval Aeronautic Policy," Hearings of the General Board of the Navy, General Board Records (Washington: Naval Historical Center: Operational Archives Branch).

furnished by outside contractors; it did not engage in long production runs. The NAF also engaged in classified experimental work and research, and proved invaluable as a check on manufacturers' prices. For example, the NAF could produce a VE-7 for $6,000 while the industry charged $12,000.[20] There the matter rested until revived by the Dwight Morrow Board in 1925.

Keenly desirous of junking inefficient wartime surplus models and obtaining engines of light weight but great power, Moffett funded the development of Charles Lawrance's radial air-cooled engine, which lacked the radiators, coolant, and "plumbing" that caused most of his problems in liquid cooled types. In fleet exercises his planes spotted for long-range gunfire, took photographs and movies, towed target sleeves for antiaircraft firing, and tracked torpedoes fired by ships so that they could be recovered. Major criticisms by fleet commanders and others were the absence of carriers, poor fighting and observation planes, the lack of radios for torpedo planes, and Moffett's alleged use of aviators to advertise naval aviation rather than to cooperate with the fleet or provide coast defense. Moreover, he favored the products of the NAF over those of private industry.

By 1925 Moffett's public relations efforts, particularly those in reply to personal attacks by Mitchell, so irritated leaders of the Navy Department that the direction of the Navy's publicity campaign was given to Rear Admiral Hilary P. Jones. Moffett retorted that he had tried to let the public know that "the Navy had some aviation." Now he heard rumors that he would be disciplined and feared that he would not be reappointed as Chief of BuAer. However, by 1924 an understanding had been reached between aviators and fleet officers of the mutual support they must provide to achieve the fleet's objectives. As part of a ship's fire control and gunnery organization aviators gained the respect of surface warfare officers to such an extent that at the end of 1924, the CNO, Admiral Charles F. Hughes, declared that the U.S. Navy had the best air force in the world. Moreover, in exercises held in Hawaiian waters in 1925 the attacking fleet landed an army ashore. In this "Battle of Oahu," the value of the *Langley*, of aircraft, and of tenders was attested to by both fleet and army commanders. The greatest need was for fleet carriers to carry a war to the Western Pacific. Planes from such carriers could destroy Japanese planes operating from island bases and capture the latter. After the Admiral Hugh Rodman Board on the Shore Establishment recommended in 1923 the building of bases on the West Coast of the United States, in Hawaii, and in the Panama Canal Zone, Moffett advised the CNO on the development of both Heavier-than-Air and LTA stations there and on the number and types of aircraft to base at each.[21]

President Harding died in August 1923 and was succeeded by Calvin Coolidge, whose main interest in military affairs was in reducing their cost. Tarred by association with the Teapot Dome scandal, naval secretary Edwin Denby resigned and was succeeded by Curtis D. Wilbur, who favored building ships and carriers up to treaty limits. Wilbur was upheld by the report of a board headed by Admiral Edward W. Eberle, which was directed to "recommend policy with reference to upkeep of the Navy in its various branches for the next ten years." The battleship remained the index of naval power, said Eberle, but naval aviation should be further developed.[22]

Moffett's fear that his public relations campaign would prevent his renomination proved groundless. On the other hand, for publishing articles without permission, Mitchell was denied reappointment as Assistant Chief of the Army Air Service. He reverted to his permanent grade of colonel and was banished to obscure Fort Houston, near San Antonio, Texas.

Moffett built an impressive record during his first term. By 1925 both liquid-cooled and radial engines had been greatly improved, and his planes held twenty-two of forty-two world records. With most wartime aviation stocks used up, Moffett began to purchase new equipment on the open market, thereby giving a great boost to the industry. Moreover, in just four years he had consummated the shift from wood, wire, and fabric ASW aircraft to fighters, scouts, observation planes, torpedo bombers, seaplanes, and training planes built increasingly of metal, and from nonrigid airships (blimps) to rigid ones. Materials and doctrine developed on the *Langley* were employed

20. U.S. Navy Department, Bureau of Aeronautics, "Administrative History of the Bureau of Aeronautics," 20 vols. (Washington: Bureau of Aeronautics, 1957), 11:75-77, 80; Elsbeth E. Freudenthal, *The Aviation Business from Kitty Hawk to Wall Street* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1949), pp. 73-133; William F. Trimble, "The Naval Air Factory, the American Aviation Industry, and Government Competition, 1919-1928," *Business History Review* 60 (Summer 1986): 175-98.

21. On engines, see Laurence K. Loftin, *In Quest of Performance: The Evolution of Modern Aircraft* (Washington: Naval Aviation and Space Administration, 1985); Eugene E. Wilson, *Slipstream: The Autobiography of an Air Craftsman* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1950, 1965), pp. 9-11, 52-55; "Pratt and Whitney Wasp Engine," *American Society of Naval Engineers Journal* 38 (Oct. 1926):250-53. On fleet exercises, see U.S. Navy Department, *Records Relating to U.S. Navy Fleet Problems I to XXII* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, microfilm, reel 1); James Grimes, *Aviation in the Fleet Exercises, 1911-1929* (Washington, Office of CNO; 1943); and "The Hawaiian Maneuvers," *Aviation* 77 (May 30, 1925):513.

22. "Result of Development of Aviation on the Development of the Navy: Report of the Special Board Appointed by the Secretary of the Navy in its Various Branches," Moffett Papers.

Moffett ready to fly. He flew more often and in more types of aircraft than any other rear admiral in the world. Courtesy of Special Collections, Nimitz Library, U.S. Naval Academy.

in the new fleet carriers, and experiments conducted by the small airship *Los Angeles* proved useful to the larger *Shenandoah*.

In March 1925 Moffett renewed his recommendation for a five-year aircraft building program that would produce a thousand planes and so enable aircraft manufacturers to meet the cost of new experimental and development work. But how could he get the additional personnel he would need? On 30 April 1925 he appointed his assistant Chief, Captain Alfred W. Johnson, to recommend a solution. Johnson called for a 500 percent expansion of the number of aviators by 1935, the qualifying of some line captains as aviators or observers who would then be assigned to command carriers and naval air stations, and the training of some enlisted men as pilots.[23] Moffett sent Johnson's report to the Secretary of the Navy via the CNO, Eberle. However, the Chief of BuNav, Rear

23. Turnbull and Lord, *History of United States Naval Aviation*, pp. 245-48; "Naval Flying Personnel," *Army and Navy Register* 77 (April 8, 1925):343; "Naval Flying Personnel Requirements," Ibid. 77 (April 15, 1925):395.

Admiral William R. Shoemaker, bypassed Moffett and sent a very long endorsement on it directly to Eberle. BuAer, he said, was a material bureau to which Moffett should devote his talents rather than engaging in un-officer-like publicity and politics. Last, he opposed the great expenditure for aviation, which had not as yet proved its value at sea. After Moffett complained to Secretary Wilbur about Shoemaker's attack,[24] Eberle suggested that a board be established to define aviation personnel policy. The resulting Rear Admiral Montgomery M. Taylor Board, which reported on 25 March 1926, generally upheld Moffett, and even Shoemaker agreed with most of it. The percentage of enlisted pilots was fixed at "not less than 20 percent," and Moffett could train several line captains as aviators or observers. The latter would fill the higher air commands of the fleet; they would also give aviation more clout in high circles than the still junior naval aviation pioneers. Last, the naval air reserve would be augmented.[25]

In 1924, Mitchell had begun a second campaign to win control over all aviation. Opposed by Moffett, the naval hierarchy, and the Joint Army and Navy Board, his ideas were rejected. Meanwhile, to counter Mitchell's new crusade, Moffett decided to have naval air perform spectacular feats that would show its usefulness to the fleet and to the nation. First, he planned a flight of three seaplanes from the West Coast to Hawaii. On 31 August 1925, one plane never took off, another ditched after four hours, and Captain John Rodgers, in the PN-9-1, was not heard from after 1816 hours on 1 September. Moffett sent messages of sympathy to the relatives of Rodgers' crew and also to those men killed in the crash of the *Shenandoah*, which had been sent on a combined political and training mission to the Midwest — where Coolidge was making campaign speeches — at the height of the state and county fair season, but also of thunderstorms. The *Shenandoah*'s commander, Lieutenant Commander Zachary Lansdowne, had been told by Eberle and Moffett that he could change his itinerary, defer, or cancel his flight at his own discretion. Leaving Lakehurst at 1452 on 2 September, Lansdowne planned to be over Des Moines, the site of the Iowa state fair, the following morning. Caught in a vicious storm near Marietta, Ohio, at 0545 on 3 September, his ship was destroyed. Fourteen men survived, but he and twenty-eight others perished. Two major disasters in two days gave Moffett and naval aviation awful black eyes. Mitchell used the opportunity to allege that "these accidents are the direct result of incompetency, criminal negligence, and almost treasonable administration of national defense by the War and Navy Departments." He also charged Moffett with being a publicity seeker.

Still in San Francisco after seeing Rodgers off, Moffett determined to return to Washington "and put a stop to this." On 14 September he gained headlines by assailing Mitchell as being "of unsound mind and suffering from delusions of grandeur." Rodgers then alleviated some of the pressure on Moffett when, after sailing his PN-9-1 for nine days, he steered her into port on the Hawaiian island of Kauai.[26] Pressure was also eased when a Navy Board of Inquiry and a Navy Board of Investigation blamed the *Shenandoah*'s crash on the failure of her girders to withstand high velocity air currents.[27] Coolidge himself preferred charges against Mitchell, and when the service secretaries asked him for a new investigation of aviation, he directed his Amherst College classmate Dwight Morrow to conduct one.

The Morrow Board held hearings from 21 September to 15 October and then wrote its report. It recommended that, while there should be no independent air force, the Army Air Service, still under Army control, could change its name to Army Air Corps. Naval aviation would have a similar status. Each service should have an assistant secretary for air, and a Bureau of Aeronautics in the Department of Commerce should supervise all civil and commercial aviation. In addition, the board would permit carrying as extra numbers, at their request, officers who had specialized in aviation so long as to jeopardize their selection for promotion. However, BuNav, rather than Moffett, would continue to control naval aviation personnel detail and training. The Morrow Board agreed with Moffett that the NAF would continue to operate "as of yore" and that the services should have five-year aircraft building programs, with Moffett's to include two huge — 6.5 million cubic foot — rigid airships.[28] As for Mitchell, a court martial found that he had prejudiced the good order of military discipline and was guilty of insubordination. His sentence included a five-year suspension from rank, command, and pay allowances. Soon afterwards he resigned.

24. Chief of Bureau of Aeronautics to Secretary of the Navy. Subject: Naval Aviation Personnel Policy, Aug. 29, 1925, Moffett Papers.

25. "Report of Taylor Board, Jan. 25, 1926," Moffett Papers.

26. See Dwight R. Messimer, *No Margin for Error: The U.S. Navy's Transpacific Flight of 1925* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1981).

27. Among many other studies of airships, see Thom Hook, *Shenandoah Saga: A Narrative of the U.S. Navy's Pioneering Large Rigid Airships* (Annapolis: Air Show, 1973); Douglas H. Robinson and Charles L. Keller, *UP SHIP! A History of the U.S. Navy's Rigid Airships 1919-1935* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982); and "The *Shenandoah* Investigation," *Aviation* 19 (Oct. 1925):437-38.

28. *U.S. President's (Morrow) Board Hearings*, 4 vols. (Washington: GPO, 1925).

In part because Coolidge opposed its great expense and feared it might lead to a building race, Congress postponed funding Moffett's five-year aircraft building program — 1,248 planes to cost $250 million — until FY1927 and denied him the additional aviation personnel for it. Moffett put pressure especially upon the House Naval Affairs Committee, which in February 1926 reported the bill he desired. Congress then implemented all the important parts of the Morrow Board report. As a result, aviation policy in the services was regularized, civil and commercial aviation were stimulated, the aircraft industry was stabilized and began a fantastic growth, and Assistant Secretaries for Air were added to the War, Navy, and Commerce Departments.

By 1928, its efficiency enabled the aviation industry to so reduce its prices that it was cheaper for Moffett to buy new aircraft than to maintain old ones after a reasonable life. Meanwhile, he applauded Secretary Wilbur's plan to build the Navy up to treaty strength. Rather than a "71-ship" program and an additional 850 aircraft Moffett said were needed for it, Congress cut Wilbur's program to fifteen cruisers and the small, 13,800 ton aircraft carrier *Ranger*, the first carrier to be built from the keel up.[29]

Severe tests of Moffett's carriers and aircraft were made during the annual fleet exercises of 1926-1929. In 1926, after *Langley* aircraft "bombed" the Panama Canal, naval leaders demanded still more carriers and aircraft. In 1928, planes from the *Lexington* and *Saratoga* found the defenders of Pearl Harbor asleep. In 1929, Moffett received a great boost from a successful attack against the Panama Canal by the *Saratoga*. After a three-hundred mile sweep almost to the Galapagos Islands, she launched 32 fighters, 17 dive bombers, and 17 torpedo bombers from 140 miles out and caught defenders flat-footed. Meanwhile other planes destroyed the locks at the canal's Atlantic end.[30]

With Moffett's term to end in March 1929, rumors abounded that he would be retired because of the no-third-term tradition — not policy — for bureau chiefs. He again made history by being reappointed for an unprecedented third term, this time by President Herbert Hoover, who proved to be a great disappointment to him. Fortunately for Moffett, Admiral William V. Pratt, a friend of naval aviation, served as Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, in 1929 and as CNO beginning in 1930.

While Hoover was inclined to reduce naval power,[31] Moffett wanted to build it up to treaty limits, in part because doing so would provide work for the shipbuilding and aircraft industries and relieve unemployment. Instead, his appropriations were cut and statesmen rather than naval officers were chosen as delegates to the London Naval Conference of 1930. Moffett served only as a technical advisor on aviation matters. Despite his attempts to "indoctrinate" his delegation with the importance of air power, he had only fair success; carrier tonnage would remain unchanged and the signatory powers agreed that they could put landing decks on 80,000 tons of cruisers — the flying deck cruisers that Moffett called for but which were never built.[32] Moffett was pleased with approval of the London Naval Treaty by the Senate on 21 July 1930, then persistently argued that with capital ships frozen by the Washington Treaty of 1922 the only way to increase the power of the fleet was with aircraft — which were not regulated by treaty — and got nowhere. On the other hand, he completed his five-year aircraft program in 1931 a year early and at great saving. Moreover, he had a pledge for replacement aircraft for years to follow, obtained funding for two large rigid airships, the *Akron* and *Macon*, for an LTA base at Sunnyvale, California, and for developing the PBY, a flying boat capable of covering the vast distances of the Pacific.

Under Moffett's leadership, naval aviation, the "infant prodigy" of 1921, had become in a decade the best air force in the world, most of it on the back of the fleet. In January 1932, Admiral Harry E. Yarnell proved the worth of the fleet carriers when their aircraft on a Sunday morning surprised the fleet anchored in Pearl Harbor. The attack was witnessed by Japanese and reported to Tokyo. Moffett's only loss was the transfer of the coast defense mission to the Army Air Corps — which he violated by calling his bombers patrol planes!

Moffett at first doubted the value of rigid airships for military and commercial missions, but sponsored their development to determine if they could be made efficient for both purposes.[33] He paid with his life for his decision when killed aboard the *Akron*, which was destroyed by

29. Moffett's Report in *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy, 1928* (Washington: GPO, 1928), p. 45; *The New York Times*, January 29, 1928, 12:1, and Jan. 31, 1928, 10:2; Turnbull and Lord, *History of United States Naval Aviation*, pp. 260-62.

30. *Records Relating to U.S. Fleet Problems I to XXII, 1923-1941* Washington: Naval Archives Microfilm Projects, 1975, Reel 9); Wilson, *Slipstream*, pp. 135-48.

31. John Richard Meredith Wilson, "Herbert Hoover and the Armed Forces," Ph.D. diss. (Northwestern University, 1971), pp. i-ii, 1-14, 30-1, 55.

32. Moffett to Claude Bailey, Aug. 31, 1931, Moffett papers; Ernest Andrade, Jr., "The Ship That Never Was: The Flying Deck Cruiser," *Military Affairs* 32 (Dec. 1968):132-40.

33. Moffett to Captain Harry Shoemaker, USN, Oct. 17, 1931, Moffett Papers; Clark and Reynolds, *Carrier Admiral*, p. 36; "*Graf Zeppelin* Opens a New Era of Travel," *The New York Times*, Sept. 1, 1929, 9:1-8.

vertically opposed air currents off the New Jersey coast on 4 April 1933.[34]

For twelve years Moffett served as the "propeller of naval aviation," as Will Rogers called him. He had a natural affinity for making friends of persons from all walks of life, great ability in public relations, skill in obtaining Congressional approval for his programs, and a tremendously competitive spirit. He helped block demands for an independent air force and department of defense. He brought into naval aviation captains who, except for two pioneers, filled the highest aviation positions during World War II and provided the organization, equipment, and trained personnel that made possible the great expansion of naval aviation during that war. Although Mitchell's demand for a separate air force was answered in 1947, the Navy, as Moffett wished, remains a vital leg in the triad of power that provides national defense.

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# Serving Tsar and King: George Tate, Admiral in the Russian Imperial Navy

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EIGHTEENTH century warfare provides many instances of both technology transfer of goods and ideas, and cosmopolitanism in individuals' service. In the former instance, assistance generally passed from the advanced nations of western Europe, particularly Britain, to the less advanced powers, who used such attributes as their strategic position, larger numbers or raw materials to build up their technical skills and equipment in exchange. In the latter instance, foreigners served in armies and navies for diverse reasons, including adventure, a need to get as far away from home as possible, greater opportunities for advancement in a recently established service, or perhaps an interest in, even a devotion to, a cause. The coalitions that developed, particularly during the period of the wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon, offered numerous instances of foreigners finding themselves fighting against countrymen — or under their command, as was the case for George Tate, an Englishman serving in the Russian Imperial Navy.

The Russian military and naval services of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had a tradition of welcoming — and needing — foreign shipbuilders, soldiers, and sailors. Among those whose names are indelibly connected with Russian history are eighteenth century naval commanders John Elphinstone and Samuel Greig, and the soldiers Patrick Gordon and Franz Lefort, friends and advisors to Peter the Great. Scots, for reasons associated with English history, were particularly numerous in the ranks of the armed services. Americans will remember the brief, and not particularly successful, service of John Paul Jones in the late 1780s.[1] There were numerous foreign settlements in Russia, involving trade (especially in naval stores — masts, hemp, pitch) and diplomacy, and the British community in St. Petersburg, for example, had its own minister and Anglican church.[2]

These connected threads of the cosmopolitan aspects of military and naval service, coalition diplomacy, and technological transfer come together with a particular focus, or rather, in a lens with which to examine this topic: George Tate, an Englishman in Russian naval service for over 40 years. Tate's story is particularly appropriate today, now that the greater Portland, Maine area has become a sister city to Archangel. The recent ties between the two cities go back to the Second World War, when South Portland-built Liberty ships sailed in convoys to the Russian port. But a century and a half earlier, a young Englishman who grew up and learned to sail on Casco Bay was serving as a Russian Rear-Admiral, based in Archangel.

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2. A.G. Cross, "Chaplains to the British Factory in St. Petersburg, 1723-1813," *European Studies Review* 2, No. 2 (1972): 125-142; I.R. Christie, "Samuel Bentham and the Western Colony in Krichev, 1784-1787," *Slavonic and East European Review* 48, No. 3 (1970): 232-247, and 49 (1972): 173-197. I also have a manuscript on the British colony drawn from the registers of British church records in the Guildhall Library in London which has been submitted for publication.

coalition against French forces in the 1790s. It was a confusing time in Russian history, as Catherine II ("the Great," 1763-1796) demonstrated by forming the League of Armed Neutrality against Britain, and then switching to the anti-French side. Her son, Paul I (1796-1801), at first remained in the Second Coalition, then switched, primarily as a result of his opposition to British policies in the Mediterranean. At the time of his death, he had given orders for an invasion of British-controlled India. His son, Alexander I (1801-1825), also moved from joining the Third Coalition against France to a reluctant membership in the Continental System after the Peace of Tilsit (1807) and then again to the anti-French position after the 1812 invasion.

Throughout these turns of policy, George Tate remained a British subject in the Russian imperial service. Although he corresponded with his brothers in England and the United States, and even visited Portland on a couple of occasions, he told his brother Robert after their father's death that he had no interest in purchasing the family home in Stroudwater "as England would be the place of returning to should I ever leave this Country."[3]

Tate's long standing commitment to both his native country and the country where he practiced his profession coincided with the Russian use of alliances with other, more militarily advanced European powers. In the 1790s, Russian squadrons were detached to assist the British in operations first off the coast of Holland and later off the coast of France. Tate, as one of the junior officers, was not in a position to carry much weight with the English, in particular with their irascible commander Admiral Robert Duncan, hero of Camperdown. He may even, perhaps, have been looked at askance by his fellow Britons. But in any case, there were advantages to the Russians from their actively joining the coalition; they were taking advantage of the opportunity to gain such benefits as training their sailors and marines and obtaining new or more up-to-date equipment, while relieving the British of some of the more tedious work of the war. Overall, it was probably a net gain to the Russians, and judging from the official correspondence, the British government shared that view.[4] Tate's service, and the Russian contribution to this particular phase of the wars, may be seen as both an early form of a technological transfer of skills, and one which was greatly valued, as evidenced by the honors he received from both sides.

3. Autograph letter, George Tate to Robert Tate, Cronstat [sic], August 10, 1801, Maine Historical Society (MHS), Portland, collection 198.

4. E.H. Turner's article, "The Russian Squadron with Admiral Duncan's North Sea Fleet," in *Mariner's Mirror* 49 (1963): 212-240 presents some of the same story, but without any footnotes to the documents she used.

The full story about George Tate as well as of the Russian squadrons cannot yet be told through the published and unpublished records available. These include published sources on the Russian navy, brief biographical information in British and Russian sources, some indirect references in published histories of the period to naval battles in which Tate participated, Tate family materials in the Maine Historical Society, and the chief manuscript sources in the British archives — primarily Admiral Duncan's official reports, his correspondence with the Russian commanders, his private papers, and the British and Russian commanders' correspondence with Evan Nepean, Secretary of the Admiralty. Since Tate was not the commanding officer on the Russian side, and therefore not in a position to direct requests or reports to the British, it is not surprising that there is so little of his correspondence in the British records. Presumably, correspondence exists between Tate and his superiors, as well, perhaps, as such information as to whether he was particularly selected for this operation because of his nationality. Greater access to archives in the Soviet Union in the future may make it possible to look for such confirming and expanding evidence.

The shorter version of this story pulls together the various elements of George Tate's career in Russian service, and the particular ways in which the Russian naval operations were seen as a distinctly two-way street, an opportunity for the Russians to improve their sailors, their ships, and their international position. Such joint action was not always comfortable, as the official correspondence and Duncan's private correspondence show.[5]

George Tate was born near London, England on June 14, 1746, the fourth son of George Tate Sr. and his wife Mary. (One of the older sons, George Jr., had died in infancy, and so our subject was usually referred to in family listings as "George II"; a daughter, Mary, had also died as an infant.) The family records indicate that

5. The Admiralty papers are in the Public Record Office at Kew, and the Duncan papers in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. These records included references to the arrival, provisioning and outfitting, and repair of Russian ships during the periods of service of the detached squadrons in the 1790s; there are some files listed under the name of the Russian commander, Admiral "Mackaroff" [sic].

It is unclear what is available in the Central Naval Archives in Leningrad; a Western authority on archives in the Soviet Union, Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, notes that foreigners are almost never granted access to military and naval papers. (Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *A Guide to Archival Holdings in the Soviet Union* [Princeton, 1981].) However, there have been some changes in access to other, previously closed collections; see Hugh Ragsdale, "A Report on Working in the Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossii" [Archives of Russian External Policy], *Slavic Review* 48, No. 2 (1989):269-271.

George Tate Sr. had served in the Baltic as a youth and was later employed there as a British mast agent, whose job it was to select and purchase the tall trees to be used as masts for Royal Navy ships. There is also anecdotal reporting that he had met Peter the Great; since he was born in 1700, while Peter died in 1725, there is chronological plausibility to the story. However, since much of the British timber trade was through the Northern Dvina port of Archangel, and Peter's last recorded visit to Archangel was in 1702, it seems this may be only a slight possibility:[6]

Tate Sr. moved his wife Mary and their four sons (Samuel, William, George, and Robert) to the village of Stroudwater, an area adjacent to the town of Falmouth, then in the district of Massachusetts, in 1751. The family lived here for some time, the patriarch himself dying in 1794; Mary died in a bizarre accident in 1770, shot by a trap intended to catch burglars. The eldest son Samuel (1738-1814), practiced the family trade as a captain; William (1740-1833), after being found guilty of murdering his mother through the burglar trap, was pardoned and returned to England; Robert (1751-1804) also served as a captain, engaged in the Baltic trade. And George II rose to become an Admiral in the Russian Imperial Navy and a Senator (Imperial advisor), dying in St. Petersburg in March 1821.[7]

George Tate's career with the Russian navy included service in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, but the preponderance of his service was with the Baltic fleet. In the 1790s, he served with the squadrons detached to aid the British in the blockade of Holland (or Batavian Republic, as it was then known). During the Wars of the First Coalition, he and his fellow Russian sailors blockaded the coast; in the Wars of the Second Coalition, he was involved in plans for the Russo-British invasion of the coast of Holland and of France (in the latter case, from the Channel Islands), which had to be cut short as the French and Dutch armies responded energetically to the invasion. Not least, he had the responsibility of leading divisions of the Baltic fleet, from both Kronstadt and Archangel, to safety — and general inactivity — prior and subsequent to the Napoleonic invasion of Russia in 1812.

Admiral George Tate, about 1795, by English artist William Naish, courtesy of the Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine.

For these services, George Tate received promotions from all the Russian rulers he served, finally being named a full Admiral in the reign of Alexander I. Tate was named a Senator in 1816, presumably an unusual honor for someone not a subject of the tsar.[8] He also received a gold sword from George III for his participation in the blockades; in his will, Tate left it to his brother William

6. The dates of Peter I's visits to Archangel are 1693, 1694, and 1702, as inscribed on the base of a statue to Peter erected there in 1911; the information comes from an English language historical handbook on the region, published as an exercise book for Russian students of English by the English Department of the M.V. Lomonosov Pedagogical Institute of Archangel (Archangel, 1984), pp. 4, 18.

7. Family information on the Tates comes from William David Barry and Frances Peabody, *Tate House: Crown of the Maine Mast Trade* (Portland, 1982) and from Barry's article, "Maine's One and Only Russian Admiral," *DownEast* 30, No. 5 (December, 1983): 38-39, 66-69. Stroudwater is now an area of Portland, Maine.

8. Information on Tate's life and career is included in both British and Russian biographical sources. I have used the entries in the British *Dictionary of National Biography*, and two standard Russian sources, *Obshchii Morskoi Spisok [General Naval List]* and *Russkii Biograficheskii Slovar [Russian Biographical Dictionary]*.

The Russian sources include specific information on ships Tate commanded at various times, but the information is often contradictory or incomplete. There is greater information available in published sources on the history of the Imperial Navy, including N. Monasterev and Serge Terestchenko, *Histoire de la Marine Russe* (Paris, 1932); N.B. Novikov, *Boevaia Letopis Russkogo Flota [Fighting Chronicle of the Russian Fleet]* (Moscow, 1948); *and Istoriia Russkoi Armii i Flota [History of the Russian Army and Fleet]* Moscow, 1911-1913).

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Napoleon's crossing of the Niemen in June 1812 altered circumstances for Tate, as indeed for millions of others in Europe. In October, he was commander of the Baltic fleet of ten ships of the line and five frigates, which sailed from Kronstadt, intending to meet a fleet of eight ships of the line under Vice-Admiral Robert Crown (another Briton in Imperial service), coming from Archangel. Crown's group missed its instructions, however, and sailed to Sveaborg. Eventually, the two groups travelled together, under British protection, through the Great Belt and underwent repairs at the Swedish port of Goteborg, finally arriving at the Nore on December 13. George Tate returned to Russia in 1813, but the standard naval sources do not indicate any further participation in duties aboard ship; given his age, 67, this is not unexpected.[15]

Clearly, George Tate participated in the activities of the Imperial Russian Navy, and particularly the Baltic fleet, at a time of growing significance for Russia's commercial and military development. Russia, a relatively backward state, benefited from technological transfer from the more advanced states. The borrowings and incorporations from the West in an area such as culture are well known: Catherine's correspondence with the *philosophes* and her invitation to Diderot to publish in Russia, the translation of novels from French, German and English, the sending of Russian students to study abroad (a large number, including the son of Princess Catherine Dashkova, at Edinburgh), scientific contacts which led to Benjamin Franklin's being named a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and so on.

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Duncan had obviously expended a great deal of time and effort in trying to ensure that the two groups would work well together, even informing Vice-Admiral Hanikov that it would be permissible to repeat orders from Duncan in "the Signal best adapted in his own Signals," or to communicate in Russian if that were more convenient.[20] The Russians were also expressing a cooperative tone, as this comment by Hanikov to Duncan indicates: "The success of your chase yesterday gave us all the greatest pleasure and I flatter myself with its being a Happy omen of our ensuing cruize."[21]

This cruise, however, proved to be less than completely satisfactory, and set a tone for Duncan's constant complaining, for the Russians reported their inability to stay on station beyond the third week in September, and permission was granted for them to return to port. Among the reasons the commanders gave were the sickness of many of the Russian sailors and lack of provisions, particularly fresh water. On September 27, the Russian squadrons arrived at Deal and immediately reported their needs for medical treatment, repairs, and supplies.[22]

Tate's first appearance in the archival record is in a letter of October 2, 1795 to Admiral Duncan in which he advised the British commander of his presence in British waters and referred to his earlier service under Duncan and the hospitality he had received at Duncan's house in Leith. (Presumably he was referring to the previous attachment of Russians to the British in the preceding summer and fall.)[23]

However, such reminders of good relations did not convince Duncan of the felicity of the present enterprise nor ease his suspicions that the Russians were not a net asset to the British effort. In his letters to Nepean and in logbook entries, Admiral Duncan frequently refers to the length of time needed to repair and provision the Russian ships. He also complains about the Russians' insufficient, or less-than-timely, compliance with his orders.[24] By late November, Duncan complained to Nepean that if the weather continued to be bad, "I do not expect to be long in company with my Russian friends," and that "if the Publick ... [expects] much service from them I tell you *for your own information* they will be disappointed." [Emphasis in the original.][25]

Although it would not be a defense which Duncan would have appreciated, many of the Russian sailors, and their ships, were experiencing the miseries of sailing in a running tide for the first time, since there are only minimal tides in the Baltic. Of course, no one could claim the same for the Channel and the North Sea. There was also a problem at this time as to whether the two Russian Rear-Admirals (Tate and Makarov) should have to obey the signal orders of the British Rear-Admiral Peter Pringle, since they were senior to him in rank. Duncan had suggested a promotion for Pringle, which Nepean rejected. The situation was resolved when Vice-Admiral Hanikov joined the fleet, and was therefore able to relay signals directly from Admiral Duncan.[26]

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19. September 4, 1795, Duncan Papers, Box 3, no. 249.

20. Duncan to Hanikov, Memo, August 18, 1795, ADM 1/522, f. 191.

21. Hanikov to Duncan, August 26, 1795, Duncan Papers, Box 3, no. 216.

22. Hanikov to Duncan, September 10, 1795, Duncan Papers, Box 3, no. 258; Nepean to Duncan, September 10, 1795, Duncan Papers, Box 3, no. 360; Statement of John Cleland, Lieutenant, Surgeon, Deal Hospital, September 10, 1795, Duncan Papers, Box 3, no. 262; Nepean to Duncan, September 10, 1795, Duncan Papers, Box 3, no. 263; Hanikov to Duncan, 2 letters of September 27, 1795, Duncan Papers, Box 3, nos. 265, 266.

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Tate's service with the Russian Imperial Navy's Baltic fleet took him from Archangel to Portsmouth, by way of Leith and the Texel. British port and dockyard locations are also noted.

A return to sea and the coming of more pleasant weather in the spring of 1796 did not end the frictions. Another British commander of unknown rank, Macbride, who had temporarily relieved Duncan in charge of the joint fleet, complained about an incident in which he considered that Tate's ship and other Russian vessels had abandoned their stations. In Macbride's opinion, the Russian ships were "most interested in being able to get into a port," since he considered that "four Frigates at the same time should all have been rendered unable to keep the Sea, is what I cannot give Credit to ...."[28] In

28. Macbride to Nepean, June 7, 1796, ADM 1/523, f. 158.

> occasions for His Majesty's Service, and have directed me to acquaint Lord Grenville [British Foreign Secretary] therewith for the information of the Russian Minister.[19]

Duncan had obviously expended a great deal of time and effort in trying to ensure that the two groups would work well together, even informing Vice-Admiral Hanikov that it would be permissible to repeat orders from Duncan in "the Signal best adapted in his own Signals," or to communicate in Russian if that were more convenient.[20] The Russians were also expressing a cooperative tone, as this comment by Hanikov to Duncan indicates: "The success of your chase yesterday gave us all the greatest pleasure and I flatter myself with its being a Happy omen of our ensuing cruize."[21]

This cruise, however, proved to be less than completely satisfactory, and set a tone for Duncan's constant complaining, for the Russians reported their inability to stay on station beyond the third week in September, and permission was granted for them to return to port. Among the reasons the commanders gave were the sickness of many of the Russian sailors and lack of provisions, particularly fresh water. On September 27, the Russian squadrons arrived at Deal and immediately reported their needs for medical treatment, repairs, and supplies.[22]

Tate's first appearance in the archival record is in a letter of October 2, 1795 to Admiral Duncan in which he advised the British commander of his presence in British waters and referred to his earlier service under Duncan and the hospitality he had received at Duncan's house in Leith. (Presumably he was referring to the previous attachment of Russians to the British in the preceding summer and fall.)[23]

However, such reminders of good relations did not convince Duncan of the felicity of the present enterprise nor ease his suspicions that the Russians were not a net asset to the British effort. In his letters to Nepean and in logbook entries, Admiral Duncan frequently refers to the length of time needed to repair and provision the Russian ships. He also complains about the Russians' insufficient, or less-than-timely, compliance with his orders.[24] By late November, Duncan complained to Nepean that if the weather continued to be bad, "I do not expect to be long in company with my Russian friends," and that "if the Publick ... [expects] much service from them I tell you *for your own information* they will be disappointed." [Emphasis in the original.][25]

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By fall, the Russians were preparing to return home, on orders from Catherine, and there were conciliatory references to cordial relations between the two forces. Vice-Admiral Hanikov, on leaving England on October 5, wrote to Nepean expressing his appreciation for all the assistance given to him and the Russian squadrons. In an annotation on the document, probably the draft of a reply, Nepean wrote that he must:

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Catherine's death in December and the accession of her son Paul did not immediately change the orders to the Russians. In the spring of 1797, their ships were still watching the Dutch coast, in conjunction with the British fleet. The correspondence continues to refer to the regular need of the Russian ships for assistance, particularly in repairing damage suffered in spring storms. For example, in a letter to Nepean of March 7, Makarov notes that he is working to have the Russian fleet ready for sea:

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44.4

Yarmouth Roads July 8th 1799.

Sir

You will have the goodness to acquaint the Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty, that agreeable to an Order from Admiral Lord Duncan I have been there last Spring Tides, of Helvoetsluys, with His Imperial Majestys Ships, Sevolod, Swany Orel, Bolaslaff & Europa, and returned again to this Anchorage Yesterday Evening.

The Weather being so thick, and Hazy, all the time I was of there, I had no oppertunity of Seeing myself the Dutch Ships, but was informed from Capt. Tinling of the Scorpion, (who is cruising of that place) that they are laying in the Same Situation, that they have been for this Some time past.

I have Lord Duncan's further Orders to proceed every full and change of the Moon, until his return from Sea Shall again Sail on that Service the 14th instant. Their Lordships Orders of 1st July for the Same purpose I received only Yesterday Evening. I am.

Sir

Your most Obediently

Geo: Tate

Evan Nepean Esqr.

A typical example of Tate's reports to the Admiralty shows the routine of his service with the Russian fleet during the Napoleonic Wars. Writing from Yarmouth Roads to Secretary of the Admiralty Evan Nepean on July 8, 1799, Tate outlines his reconnaissance activities along the Dutch coast, comments on the weather and the movements of Dutch ships, and acknowledges his orders to continue monitoring the coast. Crown copyright material reproduced by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Public Record Office ADM 1/3245.

intensity of coal fire." In a notation on the back of the letter, Nepean gave orders for this replacement to be made.[42]

In June, Makarov reported that he had received orders from the Tsar to send back three disabled ships, but would like to have them equipped for the voyage; he hoped that they would quickly be able to return to joint service. In an endorsement, Nepean indicated his approval, and also his hope that the ships and crew would return when convenient.[43] Tate, meanwhile, had returned to continue the cruising off the Dutch coast, off Helvoetsluys, and reported that he was, under Duncan's orders, continuing the duty "every full and change of the Moon."[44] During the fall, preparations were under way for the proposed landfall in Holland, and the consular reports from various Scandinavian ports refer to frequent passages of Russian ships through the Sound.[45]

In September, Makarov reported to Nepean that he had a list of the ships, and the troops each was carrying, which were arriving with Admiral Chicagov. There were eleven ships, including one "American hired vessel," and a total of 5,484 troops.[46] Considerable correspondence ensued about the possible landing places for the Russian troops, which would still allow their ships to get out, and to avoid being trapped by enemy ships or fire.[47]

The Dutch landings were not successful and the troops had to be evacuated hurriedly. Duncan, increasingly irritated with the joint operation, laid much of the blame on the Russians and their commanders. As he wrote in a report to Nepean headed "Remarks," there should be no quibbling by the Russians whether they were obeying a British Admiral or Vice-Admiral, since their emperor had said they were to be directed by a British officer. Even more disgustedly, Duncan noted:

> As to the Russian Admiral's reports to the Emperor since he came to England no service has been done by any of his Ships, so he might have put them all down [as] refitting.[48]

Duncan's opinion must be contrasted with that of another British commander, Dickson, who reported with great enthusiasm:

> I think it a duty incumbent on me, to state to you, for the information of their Lordships, that I experienced from the Rear Admiral the most cheerful Co-operation, in every point of service, where the Interests of both powers were so materially connected; that in the execution of this very arduous task, he evinced a promptitude, which deserves the highest commendation, and the manner in which his Squadron put to Sea, from so dangerous, and critical a navigation, reflects still greater credit, on his professional abilities. I beg leave also to add, that I entertain the most favourable opinion of all the Captains, Officers and Crews, of his Imperial Majesty's Ships upon this occasion.[49]

As 1799 ended, the emphasis had shifted to the preparation for the landings on the French coast the following spring, and there is considerable correspondence between Makarov and Nepean on the conditions of the Russian ships, the need for assistance in repairs and provisions, etc. The French landings were equally unsatisfactory, and arrangements had to be made to evacuate the British and Russian troops. Duncan urged the need for Russian ships to redistribute the numbers of soldiers who had been loaded onto troop ships, noting: "I am persuaded their Lordships will agree with me in opinion, the less mixture the better between the Russians and our people."[50] The question of sending the Russian troops back was a complicated, and also expensive, production, as the correspondence makes clear. Even Nepean noted, in a letter to Makarov of June 10, 1800, that he would only be able to supply the departing Russians with two months' worth of provisions, even though "I am aware that by the convention this Country is to be at the expence of sending the Troops back to Russia."

In his reply, Makarov noted that the provisioning would begin June 12, but that given that many of the Russian soldiers were sick or wounded, the transport ships would not be able to put to sea soon, so they would need supplies for a full three-month period. Nepean, courteously but firmly, noted that supplies were getting short for the British ships, that perhaps it would be best to start sending Russian sailors and soldiers back as soon as possible, since "it is likely that they will grow sick by continuing in a crowded state."[51]

42. Smirnov to Nepean, May 21, 1799, Nepean's endorsement, May 23, ADM 1/3245. The provision of hot food to the crew was regarded as one of the marks of a good commander.

43. Makarov to Nepean, June 30, 1799, Nepean's endorsement, July 1, ADM 1/3245.

44. Tate to Nepean, July 8, 1799, ADM 1/3245.

45. E.g. ADM 1/3842, Consular Reports, by year.

46. Makarov to Nepean, September 8, 1799, ADM 1/3245.

47. E.g. Chicagov to Nepean, September 8, 1799, Makarov to Nepean, September 11, 1799, Makarov to Nepean, September 14, 1799, ADM 1/3245.

48. Duncan to Nepean, secret, undated (late October 1799), ADM 1/527, no. 665.

49. Dickson to Nepean, November 19, 1799, ADM 1/527, no. 715.

50. Duncan to Nepean, December 15, 1799, ADM 1/527, no. 763.

51. Nepean to Makarov, private, June 10, 1800; Makarov to Nepean, private, June 11, 1800, Nepean to Makarov, June 12, 1800, ADM 1/3245.

By the end of June, the Russians were finally leaving, and Makarov reported his regret to Nepean in the following flowery but apparently sincere phrases:

> [I] tell you, with how much unfeigned regret, I leave a country, where I have enjoyed your good opinion, and had a share of your esteem, which I will never forget; I kiss Mrs. Nepean's hand in testimony of the very sincere regard I bear for her.[52]

Makarov's sentiments may be considered as indicative of the Russian officers' awareness of the value of their time and service with the British fleet. They had indeed rendered service to Britain, allowing her better equipped and manned ships to meet the enemy, but the Russians had received at least as much as they had given — more, probably, at the time, and certainly so in the long run. As M.S. Anderson, a leading authority on 18th century Russia, has noted:

> Without British help, however, the increase of Russian naval power in the eighteenth century would certainly have been much slower. It was British officers and leadership, British technicians and expertise, and British goodwill which helped to found the Russian navy under Peter I, to preserve it under Anna and Elizabeth, and to expand it under Catherine II.[53]

This assistance, under which category we can certainly include that of the British gentleman George Tate, changed Russia into a major naval power and helped "to change the European balance of power."[54]

52. Makarov to Nepean, June 29, 1800, ADM 1/3245.
53. M.S. Anderson, "Great Britain and the Rise of the Russian Navy," p. 146.
54. Ibid.

Apparently, George III also agreed that the Russian assistance had helped Britain to maintain the pressure against France and her Dutch allies, through his awarding a gold sword to George Tate. For the next few years, as Russia alternated between pro- and anti-British policies, Tate, like the other Britons in Russian service, had as a priority serving his tsar: serving his king as well was a bonus. Both Russia and Britain benefited from his actions.

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# *The American Neptune:* A Half Century of Maritime History

TIMOTHY J. RUNYAN

"One cannot be engaged with the sea without, apparently, being interested in its history."[1]
— Ernest S. Dodge, 1972

IN October of 1939 Lincoln Colcord, an author and journalist whose great love was the history of American seafaring, arrived in Salem, Massachusetts, for a monthly meeting of the Peabody Museum Marine Associates. He came to read a paper he had written on "The Last Forty Years of American Sail, 1865-1905." But when the group gathered at Salem's Hawthorne Hotel that evening, according to fellow Marine Associate and Peabody Museum Assistant Director Walter Muir Whitehill, the conversation turned to the need for a journal of maritime history. Said Whitehill, "Link became more and more emphatic about the necessity of a journal where scattered accounts of American maritime history could be brought together. By eight o'clock, when the hour for the Marine Associates meeting had arrived, he had forgotten all about his announced subject and had only the new journal in mind. In completely characteristic fashion he spoke extemporaneously upon the theme, and with such conviction and fervor that by the end of the evening there was no longer any doubt in anyone's mind that something of the sort should be attempted by the Marine Associates."[2] Later, Peabody Director Ernest S. Dodge noted that the Associates, "...without any authority whatsoever to do so or any funds, had voted enthusiastically to found the journal now known as *The American Neptune*."[3]

Thus was *The American Neptune* born. From the start the new quarterly journal of maritime history was considered a sister journal to England's *The Mariner's Mirror*. Therefore, since that journal was named after a great sixteenth century collection of nautical charts, it seemed appropriate to adapt the name "Atlantic Neptune," the title given to the magnificent eighteenth century British Admiralty survey of the New England and Nova Scotia coasts, to American use.[4] The first issue of *The American Neptune* appeared in January of 1941, with Whitehill and Colcord as editors along with Philadelphia banker Marion V. Brewington and naval architect Howard I. Chapelle, and Vernon D. Tate of the National Archives as Book Review Editor. The first Editorial Board consisted of historians, librarians, naval officers, sailors, collectors, those active in maritime museums, and pure amateurs from the United States and Canada. Few were engaged in college teaching or affiliated with learned institutions[5] — their common trait was a love of the sea and its history, and the same is essentially true today. A new corporation was established to publish the journal,[6] with Samuel Eliot Morison of Harvard University, one of America's most distinguished maritime historians, as its president and Whitehill as Secretary and Treasurer. A $1,500 grant from the Carnegie Corporation financed the first issue, to which Morison contributed the lead article. The subscription price was $5.00 per year.

1. Ernest S. Dodge, ed., *Thirty Years of The American Neptune* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. xiii.

2. Walter M. Whitehill, et. al., eds., *The American Neptune* 8, no. 1 (January, 1948): 4, and *The East India Marine Society and the Peabody Museum of Salem: A Sesquicentennial History* (Salem: The Peabody Museum, 1949), pp. 120-121.

3. Dodge, *Thirty Years*, p. vii.

4. Whitehill, et. al., eds., *The American Neptune* 8, no. 1: 4.

5. Dodge, *Thirty Years*, pp. vii-viii.

6. According to Dodge, the Peabody Museum trustees "did not choose to be responsible for the publication of a journal which they were reasonably convinced would fail." *Thirty Years of the American Neptune*, p. vii. A later group of trustees disagreed, however, and the *Neptune* has been published by the Peabody Museum of Salem since 1966.

Whitehill's office at the Peabody Museum became the journal's center of operations. Volume One, Number One opened with a statement of editorial policy, written by Whitehill, that described the *Neptune* as "a common meeting ground for all interested in the many diverse aspects of marine research." He defined the journal's "field of action" as North and South America but stated that, although it was published in the United States, studies of the maritime history of Canada and Hispanic America would also appear in its pages. Wishing to cast a broader net, Whitehill added that articles dealing with the European background of American maritime history and articles by American authors on European subjects would be accepted.[7]

The men responsible for making *The American Neptune* a reality felt that several types of articles would be appropriate for the journal. They sought to publish the results of "technical nautical and marine historical research," which they defined as articles dealing with the design, construction, and operation of various types of vessels at different periods, and works on the history of scientific navigation, including the development of the science of navigation, nautical instruments, charts, and maps. They welcomed general historical articles — those dealing with the activities of merchants and shipping lines; histories of individual vessels and voyages; studies of ports; naval, privateering, steamship, and yachting history. They further encouraged the submission of biographical sketches of shipmasters, merchants, and ship builders of significance in the maritime history of a particular region, but cautioned that "genealogical accounts and works of local piety will be avoided." Not to be avoided was sea lore — eye-witness accounts and memoirs, stories, chanteys, etc. They hoped as well to print articles on marine art, such as paintings, prints, and shipcarvings, and ship models, including accounts of collections as well as plans for constructing models. They planned to publish documents, rare tracts, photographs, and bibliographies, and to keep readers informed about the collections and activities of other marine museums. Finally, they planned a section devoted to notes and queries, where subscribers could seek and share information.[8]

The editorial further expressed the hope that the journal would strike a balance between accurate technical articles and readable general articles. The editors, said Whitehill, would "... endeavor to maintain the highest possible standards of accuracy and style, but will endeavor with equal purpose to keep the journal from becoming dull."[9] Their efforts were successful enough that they were able to report in the second issue that "the stock of the first number, which in December seemed optimistically overprinted, is now exhausted."[10] In Volume One, Number Four, the editors remarked with a sense of accomplishment that while the *Neptune* was "launched in a world at war," it had successfully completed its first year's voyage. With understandable pride, they quoted Sir Geoffrey Callendar's review of *The American Neptune* in *Mariner's Mirror*: "All members of the Society for Nautical Research will desire to be included in a cordial message of good luck and *bon voyage* to the transatlantic *Mariner's Mirror*, and will desire *The American Neptune* throngs of enthusiastic idolators."[11]

The figure of Neptune rising from the waves, which since 1983 has appeared on the journal's cover, has been a part of its pages almost from the start. But in the first issue, the illustration included a stern Benjamin Franklin lecturing to the ruler of the sea from the shore! Apparently there were some second thoughts, and the more benevolent Neptune, without Franklin, was substituted in Volume One, Number Three.[12]

Volume Two saw Morison join the ranks of editors of the *Neptune*, but the presence of the nation's leading maritime scholars at the helm never led the journal into stuffiness. Among its second year articles on such topics as Pacific sidewheelers, rigging on contemporary Mediterranean vessels, pre-Columbian navigation, and Salem shipbuilding, it found room to publish the recipe for Joseph Peabody's rum punch, and an updated recipe for a cheaper version that bowed to wartime shortages.[13] Wartime regulations on the use of paper also led the editors to lament the smaller issues and production delays that occurred during the war years.[14]

World War II also prompted a migration of the journal's headquarters to Washington D.C., where editor Whitehill, now Lieutenant Commander Whitehill, was posted to the Office of Naval Records. In fact, the Editorial Board listing was full of military titles during the

7. Whitehill, et. al., eds. *The American Neptune* 1, no. 1 (January, 1941): 3, 5.

8. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

9. Ibid., p. 4.

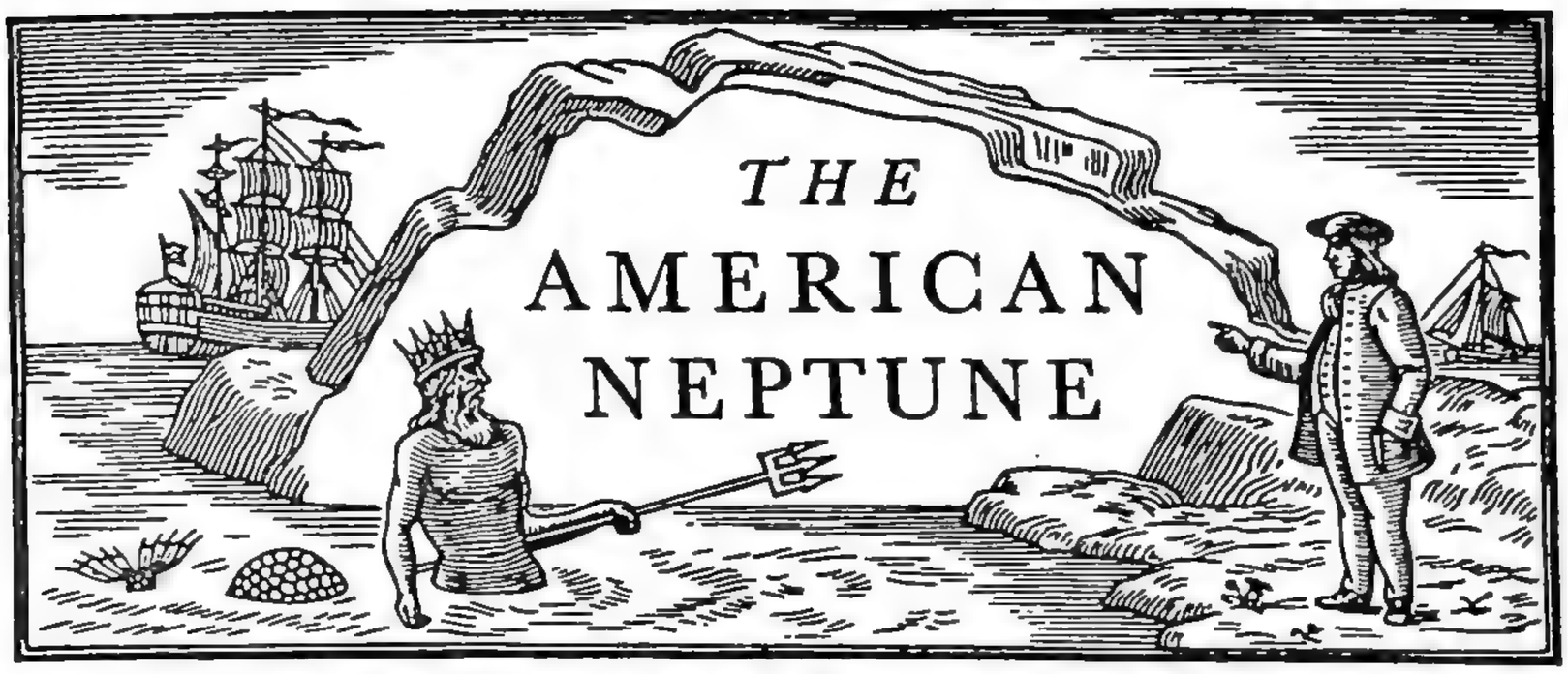
10. Whitehill, et. al., eds., *The American Neptune* 1, no. 2 (April, 1941): 107.

11. Whitehill, et. al., eds., *The American Neptune* 1, no. 4 (October, 1941): 331-2. The Society for Nautical Research is the parent organization which publishes *The Mariner's Mirror*. Publication began in January, 1911.

12. Dodge, *Thirty Years*, p. ix.

13. Whitehill, et. al., eds., *The American Neptune* 2, no. 1 (January, 1942): 42-3.

14. Whitehill, et. al., eds., *The American Neptune* 5, no. 4 (October, 1945): 253-4.




Both Neptune and Benjamin Franklin appeared in *The American Neptune*'s first two issues in 1941.

years 1942-1945. Whitehill returned to Massachusetts and to civilian status in 1946, where he continued to edit the *Neptune* from his office as Director of the Boston Athenaeum until 1950. But the dedicated circle of friends that had founded the *Neptune* and steered it through the war years was broken in 1947 with the death of Lincoln Colcord.

Operations returned to Salem in 1951 when Ernest Dodge, who had become Director of the Peabody Museum in 1950, assumed the duties of managing editor from Whitehill. His first task was to convene the Editorial Board to assess the journal's first ten years and discuss possible changes. But the concensus, after an evening of fish chowder and rum, was that the changes needed were few; Dodge reported to readers in January of 1952 that "we like the cut of her jib."[15]

After a decade as editor, Dodge reflected in 1961 on the first twenty years of the *Neptune*: "Twenty years ago it would have been impossible, and even today it is difficult to realize, that we have lurking beneath the sea a ship so prodigiously armed that she alone is capable of the most appalling destruction the world has ever seen. The nuclear submarine USS *George Washington* armed with Polaris missiles will keep the sea, never surfacing for weeks, her whereabouts known only to the highest command. Cruising the dark Atlantic waters, weaving among the bottom peaks and canyons, she keeps her vigil without end. In a matter of months she will be joined by other equally powerful ships — the new queens of the navy, successors to the famous frigates, the White Squadron, the battlewagons, and the aircraft carriers. Who knows what wonders will greet old Neptune when the next score of years has rolled away."[16]

Dodge, who served as editor for a total of eighteen years, had identified a trend that was to continue to concern those responsible for the journal. As the years passed, naval and maritime history began to address new and more complex topics with new methodologies, producing both good and bad results. In 1975, then-editor Philip C.F. "Chad" Smith criticized the "foot and note disease" that marked many submissions, noting that "inasmuch as the cat seems to have got the tongue of the articulate mariner, [we] must draw heavily on the offerings of the academic community, a circumstance which is as often rewarding as it is regrettable."[17]

When John Carter, now Director of the Philadelphia Maritime Museum, assumed the editorship in 1980, he did so at a time of transition. With the deaths of Howard Chapelle in 1975, Samuel Eliot Morison in 1976, Walter Whitehill in 1978 and Ernest Dodge in 1980, the leadership of the journal had indeed passed to a new generation. So Carter asked readers for their comments on the journal and on its future course. His findings confirmed that the journal had shifted toward more technical articles by professional historians. "The *Neptune* has turned into *the* scholarly journal of maritime history," he said.[18]

Recent efforts to evaluate the *Neptune* and chart its future course have included an analysis of the journal's content and a comparison to that of other maritime history periodicals. The analysis shows that in recent years roughly half of the *Neptune*'s articles dealt with American history and fifteen percent with British history, with the remaining thirty-five percent fairly evenly divided between

15. Dodge, *Thirty Years*, p. x-xi, quoting *The American Neptune* 12, no. 1 (January, 1952): 3.

16. Dodge, ed., *The American Neptune* 21, no. 1 (January, 1961):4.

17. Philip C. F. Smith, ed., *The American Neptune* 35, no. 3 (August, 1975): 151. Smith attributed the term "foot and note disease" to Professor C. C. Lloyd, then editor of *The Mariner's Mirror*.

18. Lincoln Bates, "A Scholarly Look at the Sea," n.d., n.p.

the Americas, Europe (other than the U.K.), and Asia. In addition, recent offerings have split fairly evenly between articles on naval and maritime history.[19] Those findings would not have surprised and would no doubt have pleased the gentlemen who endorsed the editorial statement in Volume One, Number One. The journal's founders would also most likely have endorsed recent innovations they did not envision but which came about through the efforts of the late Archibald Lewis. In 1986 Lewis produced a special issue devoted to the proceedings of the ninth annual conference of the North American Society for Oceanic History, held at the Peabody Museum, and another issue that emphasized European seafaring before 1500. However, there remain some areas of interest to the gentlemen who met at the Hawthorne Hotel in 1939 which have not been regularly featured in the *Neptune*. While the journal offered its readers one article on marine art in recent years, it has not addressed other topics emphasized by its founders: literature and lore, documents, notes and queries, museum and conference news.[20] As Dodge noted in 1972, maritime history bridges the spaces between academia, sport, and industry.[21] There is room in between for technology, culture, and current issues. *The American Neptune* is challenged to incorporate all of these elements.

19. Victor Lewinson, memo to author, November 30, 1990, p. 7.
20. Ibid.
21. Dodge, *Thirty Years*, p. xiii.

Our journal continues to be a unique venture. Born of the heart as much as of the mind, it has nonetheless become the nation's forum for maritime scholarship at its best. Nurtured by essentially the same handful of men for almost forty years, it has not become tradition bound but has reflected the change in maritime history from an avocation of some to the profession of many. The task facing us now is to embrace what is new — underwater archaeology, social history, demography and other methodologies, — without forgetting what is best about our past — that the story of the sea is a story of people, their ships, and their lives. Previous editors have frequently reminded readers that they hold the key to the journal's success, both through their submissions to its pages and their comments on what they see there. It has been so for fifty years, it is so today, and it will no doubt be so when *The American Neptune* completes its second half century fifty years hence.

# Drawn from the Sea

DANIEL FINAMORE AND PAUL WINFISKY

WHEN the members of the East India Marine Society decided in 1799 to start a museum of "natural and artificial curiosities" in Salem, Massachusetts, their thoughts were on exotic objects of foreign cultures and faraway places that were trickling back to Salem on vessels returning from trading voyages around the globe. In a nineteenth-century New England trading port where seafaring and shipbuilding were every man's business, curiosities such as a platypus skin, a mummified ibis, and a war club from Tongataboo won instant places of honor in the Society's exhibit hall.

The more mundane objects connected with maritime life — the logbooks, ship models, plans, navigational instruments, and charts — entered the Society's collection for another purpose. As with other marine societies of the period, the East India Marine Society acted as a clearinghouse of information for captains navigating in unfamiliar waters. These objects served to fulfill the Society's directive "to collect such facts and observations as may tend to the improvement and security of navigation."[1] As curiosities, however, they were thought to be "at every hand, and were too common to be placed in a museum."[2]

All that began to change with the arrival of John Robinson. While serving as a botanist, trustee, and treasurer of what was to become the Peabody Museum of Salem, John Robinson recognized that the demise of Salem's maritime industry was changing the status of these objects, and in 1889 he began actively soliciting artifacts that would serve as "a memorial of the commercial marine period." One hundred years have passed since the museum's first exhibition of maritime history on the north wall of Ethnological Hall (East Hall) in 1890. Since then, the maritime collections have grown to incorporate a wide variety of artifacts of life at sea and representations of the vessels, activities and individuals who have played a part in commercial, naval, and recreational maritime ventures. The Peabody's new exhibition, *Drawn from the Sea: Images and Artifacts from the Maritime Collections*, features a variety of the paintings, drawings, and mariners' arts that form the mainstay of the museum's permanent collection. The need for this new exhibit is proof of the fallability of the otherwise foresighted Mr. Robinson's 1921 prediction that "as time passes the accessions of portraits, ship paintings, and models are likely to be less frequent."[3]

The museum's newly opened Gallery of Maritime Arts provides a protective environment that allows for the exhibition of objects that might otherwise be considered too fragile or unstable to be put on display. Light sensitive watercolors form a large proportion of the ship portraiture in the maritime collections, particularly watercolors from the Mediterranean school of the early nineteenth century. At that time, portraits of vessels were being brought back by captains and crewmen as souvenirs of American prosperity created by the neutrality of the young nation during the naval confrontations between England and France. Many of these images carried home to Salem were painted on speculation and then hawked to the ship's company while the ship was in the foreign port. A particularly fine example is a portrait of the ship *Monk* of Salem by the artist Nicolas Cammillieri, purchased by Captain John W. Allen in 1805 and donated to the museum 102 years later by a descendent.

The Roux family were by far the most successful artists of this school, and today the largest collection of their work in America is housed at the Peabody Museum of Salem. Some of the most interesting of the Mediterranean school portraits are votive pictures designed

1. Walter Muir Whitehill, *The East India Marine Society and the Peabody Museum of Salem: A Sesquicentennial History* (Salem: The Peabody Museum, 1949), p. 6.

2. John Robinson, *The Marine Room of the Peabody Museum of Salem* (Salem: The Peabody Museum, 1921), p. 1.

3. Ibid., p. 2.

*On the Deck of the Yacht Constellation*, John Singer Sargent's 1924 watercolor portrait of Herbert M. Sears, commodore of the Eastern Yacht Club, shows the artist's familiarity with sailing craft. Courtesy of The Peabody Museum.

to act as historical documents and to give thanks for the deliverance from disaster of those involved. Francois Roux's 1860 image of the ship *Poland* depicts the vessel aflame and flying a distress signal. In May 1840, the packet *Poland* was struck by lightning and her cargo of cotton was ignited. The boats were filled and the passengers were towed astern of the flaming craft. After two days they were all rescued by the ship *Clifton* of Boston, with the *Poland* totally destroyed.

Portraits of individuals painted in foreign ports made popular souvenirs as well. Adorning the East India Marine Society's quarters were portraits of the members and of the foreign merchants with whom they traded. These portraits remained at home when the individual was abroad and also served as symbols of good faith when exchanged with merchants across the sea. One of the oldest portraits in the museum's collection is a pastel of Henry Elkins by the Dutch artist Hirschmann, dated 1791. Captain Elkins, an East India Marine Society member, was employed by Elias Hasket Derby and captained several of his vessels. A man of ill luck, he was shipwrecked several times, and his ships were successfully attacked by both British and French vessels.

The twentieth century has seen radical transformations in the maritime industry, particularly on the North Shore where maritime commerce has been overtaken by pleasure boating; this evolution is well documented in the Peabody Museum's portrait collection. John Singer Sargent's 1924 watercolor *On the Deck of the Yacht Constellation* shows Herbert M. Sears, commodore of the Eastern Yacht Club from 1914 to 1924, aboard the club's most renowned craft. Sargent's placement of his subject within a maritime setting and the ease with which he portrays the vessel's deck and mast indicate his familiarity with the circumstances of ocean travel. Indeed, the artist was equally at home on either side of the Atlantic and spent much of his life traveling between Europe and America.

Other additions of twentieth-century paintings continue the long-standing tradition of commissioning works on subjects of interest to the Society's members, particularly when no other images of the subject matter exist or when an event of historical importance occurs.

The first painting commissioned for the East India Marine Society was a portrait of the explorer James Cook in 1803. A more recent commissioned work that was donated to the museum is Tom Hoyne's *Headers on the Banks*, which illustrates the heyday of Marblehead as an important fishing port.

Robert Salmon and Fitz Hugh Lane are other artists of the Boston and North Shore scene featured in the exhibit. Of particular interest is Salmon's small 1832 painting on panel of the Chelsea, Massachusetts waterfront. Commissioned by Henry H.W. Sigourney, then a director of the Chelsea Ferry Company, this picture shows Salmon's attention to detail and portrayal of an intimate landscape, which includes the stately white structure on the riverbank that is Sigourney's house.

During his years in Boston, Salmon had direct influence on younger American marine artists, including the Gloucester native Fitz Hugh Lane. Comparing Salmon's portrait of the packet ship *United States* with Lane's oil of the clipper ship *Southern Cross* in Boston Harbor shows the former artist's influence with regard to detailed ship representation, overall composition, and the effects of lighting.

An international selection of other artists brings a breadth of subject matter to the collection with images depicting naval battles and important historical events. One example is English painter Duncan McFarlane's portrayal of the Confederate Navy sidewheel steamer *Nashville* burning the American packet *Harvey Birch*. In a different vein, the occasion of heinous crimes and other headline events brought about the production of broadsides and other printed materials that often incorporated expressive graphic images. *The Execution of the Pirates* is an intriguing example of adapting an existing print block to a specific newsworthy occurrence. Whereas the painter's "stock" woodcut depicts four criminals on the gallows, the adjacent image on the broadside and the description of their act of piracy reveals only three perpetrators. Hence, when the printer used the woodblock, he simply deleted the excess scofflaw from the scene.

Perhaps the most appropriately termed of the maritime art genre is that art that was created by mariners themselves while on a voyage or in port. Such works tended to be created with the limited materials at hand.

**Fitz Hugh Lane's 1851 oil *Southern Cross*, which depicts the East Boston-built 938 ton medium clipper in Boston Harbor, is one of the artist's few formal ship portraits and shows his talent for detail. Courtesy of The Peabody Museum.**

The oldest known figurehead in America is attributed to Samuel McIntire, ca. 1800, and is thought to represent Liberty holding a portrait of John Hancock. Courtesy of the Peabody Museum.

The ornate beckets and ropework-covered tools that were made from worn-out rigging and sailcloth and the carvings and engraved images made with the by-products of the whaleman's prey are just two examples.

The ship models made by American and Continental prisoners of war in Great Britain during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are perhaps the most extreme examples of ingenuity under hardship. Hulls and masts were made from soupbones and scraps of wood, and sometimes even supplemented by human hair when no cord was available for rigging these painstakingly accurate and often quite large models. The bone model of the French frigate *Seduisant* was probably a product of one of the large prison facilities built to hold the overflow from the infamous prison hulks. At these facilities, such as Dartmoor and Norman Cross, trade was conducted between prisoners and townsfolk, providing access to supplies for the incarcerated as well as a market for their models.

*Drawn from the Sea* is the first exhibit in the Peabody's new Gallery of Maritime Arts in the Loring Room, an exhibition space that provides the museum with an opportunity to focus on the many aspects of maritime art in its growing collection. The current exhibit will run through May of 1991, when a new exhibit featuring a selection of the works of the pre-Impressionist French painter Eugene Boudin, on loan from the Museum of Fine Arts Boston collection, will open. In the fall of 1991 the gallery will offer *Men's Lives*, a presentation of photographs of the fishermen of Long Island Sound.

*Daniel Finamore and Paul Winfisky are Associate Curators of Maritime History at the Peabody Museum of Salem.*

# Book Reviews

FREDA MORRILL ABRAMS, *Tall Ships of Newburyport* (Yellow Springs, Ohio: The Free World Press, 1989). 8½" x 11", paper, 63 pages, 25 illustrations, four charts, bibliography. $4.95.

The late maritime historian Howard I. Chapelle once told me that "the worst problem a marine historian faces is when a widow 'tidies up' the house after the funeral of her sea captain husband." In his search for data along the Maine coast, Chapelle went to see one widow who said that there had been a wooden barrel in the attic filled with ship plans, but she had thrown the whole thing out after her husband's funeral.

Now for the good news. *Tall Ships of Newburyport* is based on the personal notes of Captain George W. Goodwin of Massachusetts, who served as mate on the Newburyport ships *Montana*, *Whittier*, and *Nearchus*. Captain Goodwin wrote copiously and well, and his documents have been passed down through several generations of his family and are now carefully saved and written about by his descendent Freda Abrams. His large collection of writings was saved by his son Frank Hallett Goodwin, who ultimately gave them to his relative, Freda Abrams' mother, and finally the author acquired the whole collection. Chapelle would have been delighted that such a fine collection had been preserved and put to good use.

George W. Goodwin was born in Calais, Maine, in 1848 and started his sea career as a cabin boy on a steamer running from Calais to Boston. During his lifetime he went, in his own words, "fifty-six times around the Horn, twelve times circling the globe, out of sight of land for 25 years." When the captain quit the sea in 1909 he began to write about his career at sea. His material was published in several newspapers at that time, and he picked up a literary agent along the way. He became a Massachusetts resident and continued writing until his death in 1916.

Mrs. Abrams' handsome book begins with a briefing about Newburyport and some of the men involved in the area's shipbuilding and ship operating businesses. For those who know Newburyport today, it may come as a surprise that in the area "upriver, on both sides as far as Haverhill, during the 100 years ending with 1880, more than 1600 vessels large enough to be registered for foreign trade — over 380,000 tons, and not including a large number of small fishing craft — were built on the Merrimack River." John Currier, Jr., was the great shipbuilder along the river, having built 100 ships over a fifty year period. He built the three ships *Montana*, *Whittier*, and *Nearchus* that gave Captain Goodwin much of the seagoing experience that was the basis for his writings. The ships were owned and operated by the Cushings, especially John and William, distinguished citizens of Newburyport. Thus we have a unique business enterprise: ships built near home and up the river, ships owned and managed by townfolk, and ships successfully operated by New England crewmen and officers. Mrs. Abrams was inspired to write about her ancestor when, on a visit to Newburyport, she could not find a book on that town's famous era of shipbuilding and ship operating.

It was his experience as mate with Newburyport ships that trained Captain Goodwin to become captain of two larger New England ships: the Bath built *Sterling*, and the steel hulled *Dirigo* of the Sewall fleet. But Mrs. Abrams confines Captain Goodwin's writings to his Newburyport ship experiences and, in doing so, has lovingly crafted not only a family story but also a major contribution to a town's historical record. Of Captain Goodwin's account of skippering the *Sterling* and the *Dirigo*, Mrs. Abrams says "that's another story." If it is anything like *Tall Ships of Newburyport*, another valuable contribution will be made to our nation's maritime history.

JOHN R. HERBERT

Spring Hill, Florida

FRANK O. BRAYNARD, *S.S. Savannah: The Elegant Steamship* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1988). 5½" x 8½", paper, xii + 249 pages, preface, illustrations, notes, selected bibliography, index. $8.95.

This trade paperback is a reprint of the original classic account of the design, construction and voyages of the pioneering steamship S.S. *Savannah* first published in

1963 by the Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum of Savannah, Georgia. As such, it adds nothing new to the information presented in the previous edition but merely serves to bring the story of the *Savannah* to the attention of a new generation of readers who may have overlooked the previous publication.

In relating the story of the first ship to use steam propulsion on a transoceanic voyage, Frank Braynard did a thorough and masterful job. His text is alive with the lore and romance of early steamboating, further animated by a lively account of the personal lives, fortunes and misfortunes, and financial ups and downs of early steamboat promoters. He describes the planning and construction of vessels that preceded the "Elegant Steam Ship" and recounts as well as the evidence allows the design and principle features of the *Savannah* herself. His account of the voyage from New York to Liverpool and Baltic ports and return is based on a careful assemblage of primary sources that emphasize the painstaking care with which Captain Moses Rogers managed the affairs of this revolutionary vessel. Although a stunning technical success, the *Savannah* was never entrusted with any cargo and carried passengers only on short trips until her engine was removed, whereupon she had a brief life as a traditional sailing vessel before being driven ashore and lost off Long Island in 1821.

Where there is little to fault concerning the way this book was presented in 1963, this reviewer believes that the 1988 reprint should have included at least some attempt to update the reader relative to certain aspects of the *Savannah* story. In the original volume, the author indicates that he was, at that time, trying to put together an expedition to recover the remains of the ship. Since then nautical archaeology has come into its own as a research technique, and a modern appraisal of just what might be done to locate and recover the *Savannah*'s hulk from the sands off Fire Island would be most interesting. Likewise, when Braynard published his book originally, the second *Savannah* was plying the seas as a pioneer of nuclear power in commercial vessels. Eventually this revolutionary cargo liner was to suffer the humiliation of economic failure, technological mistrust, complex labor problems and consignment to oblivion in a way that remarkably parallels the story of the original *Savannah*. Some commentary on this by the author would have been a most welcome addition to the reprint.

JAMES E. VALLE

Delaware State University

LIONEL CASSON, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989). 9½" x 6½", cloth, xvii + 321 pages, 17 maps, 5 appendices, 2 indices. $52.50

The *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, the ancient Greek text upon which Lionel Casson's latest book is based, scarcely fills twenty-two pages. Written by an Egyptian Greek around AD 50, it is not properly speaking a periplus, or mariners' sailing guide, but a seaborne merchant's almanac of East African and Indian ports, along with their peculiar customs, natural phenomena, export commodities and import preferences, political situations, and times or distances between ports. The first half of the text is evenly divided between African and Arab ports-of-call; the second half is devoted to India's seaports. This ratio reflects the relative importance of the respective trade routes to Roman Egypt at the time.

The principal cargoes sought by the Romans in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean were luxury items for the rapidly expanding young empire, and the list of these goods is as long as it is fascinating. Equally interesting is the list of materials that the Romans exchanged for these luxuries. A reasonably typical entry for the port of Barbaricon at the mouth of the Indus River offers a taste of the style and subject matter of the periplus:

> 39. Vessels moor at Barbarikon, but all the cargoes are taken up the river to the king at the metropolis. In this port of trade there is a market for: clothing, with no adornment in good quantity, of printed fabric in limited quantity; multi-colored textiles; peridot (?); coral; storax; frankincense; glassware; silverware; money; wine, limited quantity. As return cargo it offers: costus; bdellium; *lykion*; nard; turquoise; lapis lazuli; Chinese pelts, cloth, and yarn; indigo. Those who sail with the Indian [winds] leave around July, that is, Epeiph. The crossing with these is hard going but absolutely favorable and shorter.

The brief text of the periplus, however, is far less significant than the remainder of the book, which amplifies, analyzes and interprets the manuscript. Introductory chapters on the text and author, Indian Ocean trade and political geography are followed by the actual text in the original Greek with the English translation facing each page. A general commentary is next, succeeded by a commentary on the language of the text. No less than five appendices explore a variety of specialized topics, and there are also two indices. As always, Casson's style is eminently readable, belying the years of scholarship and decades of accumulated knowledge that went into this book. Casson could make a monograph on the Manhattan phone book lively,

interesting and edifying.

Unfortunately, there are two significant drawbacks to this volume (neither attributable to the author) that will keep it out of the libraries of all but the most specialized readers. The first is that it is a rather discrete study unlikely to appeal to a general audience. However, in defense of scholarly research, this is less important than the other concern — the astonishingly high price. There is really no excuse for this, particularly since there are only seventeen maps and no photographs. With offset printing and computer publishing capability available at every commercially viable press these days, how long can even as prestigious a press as Princeton University's ask for (or receive) such prices?

PAUL FORSYTHE JOHNSTON

The Smithsonian Institution

OWEN CHASE *et al., Narratives of the Wreck of the Whaleship* Essex (New York: Dover Publications, 1989). 88 pages, illustrations, paper. $4.95.

EDWIN PETER BROWN, *In the Wake of Whales: The Whaling Journals of Capt. Edwin Peter Brown, 1841-1847* (Long Island, New York: Old Orient Press, 1988). 407 pp., index, illustrations. $57.50.

So long as there are readers of *Moby Dick*, there will be interest in the tale of the Nantucket whaler *Essex*, sunk by an angry sperm whale in the Pacific in 1819. A month after the disaster, her twenty-man crew was still alive; three months later, only eight remained after drifting thousands of miles and resorting to the ultimate extreme of cannibalism. Melville's copy of an early account of Owen Chase, her first mate, contained eighteen pages of notes upon which he based his famous novel.

There have been many editions, not surprisingly, of Chase's recollections, but the most handsome was that introduced and illustrated by Robert Gibbings and published in London by Golden Cockerel Press in 1935. It is this edition, which also included brief corroborative accounts by Gorge Pollard, the *Essex*'s second mate, which has now been reprinted in an inexpensive paperback edition by Dover Publications. The 1935 edition of 275 copies is scarce and expensive, and Dover is to be congratulated for adding this volume to its list on maritime history and transport. The twelve engravings by Gibbings are alone worth the small price, for they are as starkly evocative as those of Rockwell Kent for his famous edition of *Moby Dick*. Readers wishing for a more comprehensive framework for Chase's *Narrative*, including data on publication, Chase's subsequent career, etc., will still turn to Thomas Farel Heffernan's *Stove by a Whale: Owen Chase and the* Essex (Wesleyan University Press, 1981), the most recent new edition of Chase's story, but the Dover edition makes available this important tale of the sea in an inexpensive format.

The whaling industry in its heyday was of course vast indeed, and there are many exciting stories to be told. The inventory of *Whaling Logbooks and Journals, 1613-1927* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986, Judith Downey and Virginia Adams, eds.), lists over 5000 logs and journals in accessible collections, and there are others in private hands. Only a small proportion of these accounts will, or should, see publication, the rest fated to remain on library shelves awaiting the occasional curious researcher.To justify publication, a whaling account ought to incorporate some unique aspect: the whale's mastery over the *Essex*; the mutiny on the *Globe*; some special accomplishment (the *Catalpa*'s rescue of Fenian prisoners from Western Australia, or the *Manhattan*'s early visit to Japan); special relationships between officers and crew, or with indigenous peoples, some aspect of interest to social historians, such as the role of wives or children; or perhaps some special poetic, literary, or religious quality. Even terse and uninformative logs can be of particular importance when they mark the first entry into new waters — rounding the Horn into the Pacific Ocean, whaling the California coast, or pioneering in the Bering Sea. Rather strangely, the whaling journals of Edwin Peter Brown incorporate no such special characteristic, which is immediately obvious to the reader — particularly when it is a question of either an expensive edition (750 copies at $57.50) or a very expensive edition (250 numbered and boxed at $150.00). Contrasted, for example, with another recent similar volume, Benjamin Doane's *Following the Sea* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing and the Nova Scotia Museum, 1987), an incredibly detailed journal of whaling adventures in the 1830s and 1840s, Brown's account seems to offer rather little justification for its appearance in print.

But there is another cause to be served on occasion by such a publication. Captain Brown hailed from Oysterpond (now Orient), on Gardiner's Bay on the tip of Long Island. His logs are held by the Oysterpond Historical Society; the Old Orient Press is a non-profit organization founded with the express purpose of publishing these logs as a celebration of the seagoing heritage of this community, not only because Brown led a world-wandering adventurous life, but also because he retired to his hometown to become one of its leaders and benefactors, whose journals and artifacts hold a prominent place in the collection of the Oysterpond Historical Society and Museum. The volume, in other words, may

also be valued and commended as an effort in the preservation of one American community's maritime heritage.

Nor in fact are Brown's logs (bark *Noble*, 1841-1843; bark *Washington*, 1843-1844; ship *Lucy Ann*, 1844-1847) completely without intrinsic interest. Though not particularly informative in any striking sense, his daily entries over the years offer a good portrayal of typical whaling voyages, with long spells of anxious boredom when no whales were to be found interposed with brief triumphs or, more likely, disappointment when whales were encountered but not taken. Brown was unusual, though by no means unique, in that he practiced seriously his hobbies of carpentry and scrimshaw (several of the illustrations in the volume show the high quality of his work). More unusual, he was not above taking a hand with ongoing repairwork: "I have been over the bows to work nearly all day trying to find & Stop a small leek." (2 October 1843). Brown was also a religious man, anxious if possible to foster feelings of piety among his crew, and above all an early devotee of temperance. Although he has little to say about relations with the crew, or natives ashore, he often in a few terse words explained the day's work schedule: "Hands employed in overhauling potatoes, onions, & c., painting boats, coiling lines & what not" (29 April 1845).

In short, Brown's journals are a useful addition to the corpus of published whaling accounts, particularly given the fact that these particular Oysterpond journals are less likely to be consulted by the researcher more familiar with larger collections in New Bedford and elsewhere. The volume itself is oversized, handsomely printed in large type and supplied with a few appropriate illustrations (but none in color) and a glossary of terms as used by Brown. There are maps of the east end of Long Island and of Orient (both difficult to read), and very crudely drawn charts of the three voyages (that of the *Noble*, for example, altogether ignores the fact that Brown whaled along the east coast of New Zealand.) An introduction by Richard Bliss is helpful on the Oysterpond background, but less useful on the voyage. He makes at least one error (p. 23) in noting that Captain Brown fed the crew at his table following a general complaint "fore and aft" about the food; the entry, for 21 March 1842, makes it clear that "I have arrainged [sic] it so as to have all the Steerage going to eat at my table." (The steerage was the domain of the boatsteerers, and sometimes of such "mechanics" as the cooper and carpenter — the point being that Brown appeased the complaints only of the underofficers.) It may safely be assumed that the volume will be added to every comprehensive collection on whaling, but its value, aside from its purely local interest, lies more in its ability to complement such a collection rather than as a unique work of maritime history able to stand squarely upon its own.

BRITON C. BUSCH

Colgate University

GEORGE H. FOSTER AND PETER C. WEIGLIN, *Splendor Sailed the Sound: The New Haven Railroad and the Fall River Line* (San Mateo, California: Potentials Group Inc., 1989). 8" x 11", cloth, 384 pages, 450 photographs, maps, deck plans, appendices, glossary, bibliography, index, jacket cover and frontispiece by Elizabeth Tone. $55.00.

Approximately thirty years ago, rail fans and railroad historians pioneered the publication of large format books that combined numerous historical photographs accompanied by informative captions together with an authoritative narrative text to provide a reference work of interest to antiquarians, modelers, nostalgia buffs and serious historians alike. These handsome volumes were almost always the work of small independent publishers. They were produced with great attention to detail and major emphasis on graphics, design and layout. In recent years this format has been adapted to maritime historical subjects by authors like Fred Stindt (*Matson's Century of Ships*, privately published by the author in Modesto, CA, 1982) who have a foot in both the railroad and maritime historical camps.

Should this trend continue maritime book collectors can look forward to the creation of some magnificent new additions to their shelves. *Splendor Sailed the Sound* is such a volume. Lovingly produced by a small western publishing group, it brings together all of the aforementioned elements assembled by two authors who are both railroad and maritime oriented scholars. In pictures, captions and text it chronicles the rise and fall of the great railroad operated steamboat lines that plied Long Island Sound providing the travelling public with an elegant and immensely popular alternative to rail travel between New York, Boston, and intermediate shore points. Deeply involved in the affairs of these lines were such characters as "Admiral" Jim Fiske, "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt, and other swaggering magnificoes who populated the business landscape in the great age of steam both afloat and ashore. The Sound's steamship lines were their darlings and their playthings and they lavished great care and attention on the designing and outfitting of majestic steamboats all the while engaging in the most cutthroat business dealings imaginable to acquire assets, routes and monopolies. Meanwhile, the travelling public took the boats to their hearts and the connecting trains as well, making virtual cult figures of such men as Asa

Porter, conductor of the Fall River Boat Train, and William S. Scarlett, Chief of the beloved *Pricilla*.

In bringing the saga of Long Island Sound steamboating to life, Foster and Weiglin are to be congratulated and commended but their effort is, regrettably, not a complete success. The strongest component of their volume is undoubtedly the graphics which are alone worth the price quoted on the flyleaf. There are many formal ship portraits of tremendous interest as well as printed material, memorabilia, panoramas and townscapes. Reproduction is a bit dark in some instances indicating a need to watch the contrast when making halftones. The picture captions are competent and informative, sometimes duplicating information found in the narrative text. The text itself is the weakest link. The authors could have used the services of a really ruthless copy editor to cut out repetition, poor choices of descriptive adjectives and overuse of the comma. Although much of their subject matter is colorful in the extreme, Foster and Weiglin render it in a dry flat manner with too many paragraphs beginning with the words "but" or "yet," indicating a real need to brush up on good prose style and provide better transitions.

Taken as it is, *Splendor Sailed the Sound* is a notable effort. A second edition with cleaner writing and fewer muddy pictures would be a smashing success and well worth the attention of any steamship buff or historian.

JAMES E. VALLE

Delaware State University

DAVID HOWARTH AND STEPHEN HOWARTH, *Lord Nelson: The Immortal Memory* (New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1989). Cloth, 371 pages + index and illustrations. $24.95.

That another biography of Nelson is published must arouse some skepticism. As a recent bibliographic essay in *Naval History* by Tom Pocock, himself a recent Nelson biographer, indicates, a cottage industry of writers has been formed around the slight, one-eyed, one-armed British naval legend. The Howarths, a father-and-son team, have written on the theme of "Nelson, the man," analyzing how in his own time he became, and how he has remained, a beloved figure.

Given that aim, *Lord Nelson: The Immortal Memory* is a splendid success. The Howarths' book is not a scholarly biography, lacking footnotes and even a bibliography; there is not one "close-hauled on the starboard tack" for landlubbers to conjure with and, unfortunately, no tactical maps of the phases of even his most famous fleet actions.

Instead, the Howarths' book is popular history. Eschewing now-antiquarian sailing terms and the details of Nelson's battles, the Howarths have produced a character study of an enigmatic, complex personality. They have given equal time to early events in Nelson's life — his early campaign in Nicaragua and his voyage to India — to try to trace the development of the man. The authors, to their credit, are not mere synthesizers: they have "walked the ground," from Nelson's childhood environment at Burnham Thorpe (p. 89) to the Fig Tree Church in Nevis where the young captain married the young widow, Fanny Nisbet (p. 83). The Howarths provide important insights — the all-consuming interest in prize money for captured vessels (pp. 27, 53) reminds us that gold was not second to glory to sailors of the sailing navies. They attribute Nelson's five-year banishment from command to politics; paradoxically, they reveal how from the start of his career — which for its first twenty years was actually rather undistinguished — Nelson was marked as a bold leader and special officer.

The "Nelson touch," the Howarths show, was not merely Nelson's tactical brilliance or strategic insight — indeed, battles such as Copenhagen were slugfests without great flair — but was largely the result of the supreme confidence and affection his brother officers felt for him. Nelson's kindness instilled such feelings, whether it was saving Hardy (who himself was saving a seaman who fell overboard) from recapture by ordering a frigate to turn back towards a pursuing Spanish squadron (p. 158) or allowing a recalled, disgraced brother officer to sail his own battleship back to Britain, even at the cost of weakening Nelson's fleet (p. 313). The Howarths also reveal Nelson's immense moral courage — the weighty decisions that Nelson personally shouldered, with Britain itself at risk, based on scant information, to outguess the French fleet movements in the Mediterranean and back and forth across the Atlantic. To the Howarths, Nelson was "like a gamekeeper probing a wood on a pitchblack night" (p. 191). Whether discussing Nelson's courage, or his touching, yet indolent, relationship with Emma Hamilton, or the great hardships and ennui of maintaining the blockade of Europe, the Howarths' prose is notable for its light, deft touch. Occasionally, they show some wry humor, referring to a woman so unattractive that she was married off "to a more than usually brave army major" (p. 78). They are not afraid to insert themselves as commentators into the story, to remind " a generation brought up with radar and missiles" of the "physical closeness" of sailing warfare, asking the reader to imagine tiers of cannon from the hull of an enemy warship as the wall ten feet across the reader's room (p. 114). Their prose effortlessly carries the reader through Nelson's life. The Howarths' *Lord Nelson* succeeds in providing as

complete a picture of Horatio Nelson, the man, as we are likely to get.

FREDERICK C. LEINER

Baltimore, Maryland

FREDERIC W. HOWAY, ED., *Voyages of the* Columbia *to the Northwest Coast: 1787-1790 & 1790-1793* (Portland, Oregon: Oregon Historical Society in cooperation with the Massachusetts Historical Society, 1990). Xxvii + 518 pages, with a Foreword to the 1990 edition by Bruce Taylor Hamilton. ISBN 0-87595-250X. $40.00.

In 1941 the Massachusetts Historical Society published, as volume 79 of its *Collections*, what can only be described as a remarkable work, *Voyages of the* Columbia, under the editorship of the British Columbia judge Frederic W. Howay. This work brought together between covers all the then known documentation of the *Columbia*'s two voyages to the Northwest Coast of North America, to China and around the world, in 1787-90 and 1790-93. Upon its appearance the edition was proclaimed as a pioneering work noted for its meticulous notations and cross referencing and for its non-partisan editorial commentary on an international historical subject involving American seaborne enterprise, Spanish imperial insecurities, and British commercial and territorial aggrandizement. In lesser hands this work could have been savagely marred, but in Howay's judicial grasp the whole comprised an editorial achievement for all time. No student of Northwest Coast maritime history can fail to know about Howay's abundant list of scholarly contributions, and his edition of *Colnett's* Argonaut *Journal*, from the Champlain Society of Toronto, is another preeminent tome. During his lifetime Howay sought out, in every archive known to him, the logs, journals and accounts of any ship that sailed to the Northwest Coast in the half century after James Cook's appearance at Nootka Sound and Cook Inlet. Howay knew and wrote much about other aspects of this history of Northwestern America, including British Columbia, but he is chiefly remembered for his contributions to the literature of the maritime fur trade, and his 1941 work, and even the 1969 reprint of it from N. Israel in Amsterdam, have been long in demand by collectors, working historians, and aboriginal land claims researchers and lawyers.

It is all the more welcome that the Oregon Historical Society has given the *Columbia* book an extended lease on life, and has presented the original in such a fine format, preferable in my opinion to the Amsterdam reprint by virtue of its page size (in conformity with the original) and in the choice of paper stock and binding (in every way this is an American book demonstrating the highest quality of bookmaking). Published by arrangement with the Massachusetts Historical Society, this is an example of the type of combined operations of which Samuel Eliot Morison or Henry Steele Commager would have been proud, and Howay too. This edition sports a most handsome dust jacket, and is a most faithful reprint of the original, and as such it will and should be heavily in demand by all who collect works in the history of American enterprises in the Pacific, and on the Northwest Coast in particular.

Captain Gray of the *Columbia* is best remembered for entering the Columbia River in May 1792 and thereby extending United States sovereign claims to the Northwest Coast on the basis of priority of discovery. Kaye Lamb's recent *Vancouver Voyage* and Herbert Beal's new *Hezeta* have valuable commentaries on the relative American, British, and Spanish priorities for discovery of the River of the West. I mention this point because it seems to me that since 1941 considerable scholarship has been added to our understanding of both the international rivalry and priorities of discovery. Someday Howay's *Columbia* will, and should be, updated. Nor is the work the complete printing of the documentation now known: in the original Howay stated that Haswell's "Second Log" was unknown, but it now exists in the holdings of the Massachusetts Historical Society where it has been since 1948. The Oregon Historical Society has made important acquisitions of George Davidson's drawings and documents relating to the *Columbia* as well as Hoskins' "A Journal of a Voyage round the World in the ship *Columbia Rediviva*." But in my opinion the editors of the Oregon Historical Society Press have chosen wisely to leave well enough alone: the work stands on its own merits, now as in 1941, and tampering with Howay's notations would be like entering a rabbit warren. In particular the ethnographic material would require most extensive commentary for the uninformed reader. There is much evidence here concerning Wickananish (as John Boit spelled the name) and the natives of the West Coast of Vancouver Island that now comprise the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, and there are some sordid details of how an American boat party burnt the Meares Island village of Opitsat, apparently believing that the local Indians had become too well armed and posed a threat to the security of the Bostonians. John Hoskins' narrative recounts Captain John Kendrick's treatment of the Haida chiefs Koyah and Schulkinase, celebrated in the annals of Northwest Coast history as an example of violence and barbarity. In terms of Anglo-Spanish rivalry for Nootka Sound, readers of these documents will descry the close, harmonious

relationship that was established between the Americans and Commandant Martínez at Friendly Cove, a natural arrangement against the more powerful British then seeking to establish a permanent base of trade and dominion. As a window through which to view the unravelling saga of the Nootka Sound crisis and its aftermath, this book is unrivalled.

Howay's *Columbia* is a classic of North Americana, and its reappearance in this splendid edition is a great credit to the North Pacific Studies Centre and Series of the Oregon Historical Society. I have always thought that there was a little bit of Boston in Portland, and this book is added proof. But much more, this book demonstrates the role of the seas in American continental activities. "The seas are one," as they say, and in this book we follow as the Boston merchantmen sail down the long corridor of the South Atlantic, round tempestuous Cape Horn to Juan Fernandez and seductive Hawaii, and reach and trade on the northern savage coast of western America. The voyage home via China with tea and porcelain completes a circumnavigation during which the Stars and Stripes were first carried around the world.

BARRY M. GOUGH

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PETER KIRSCH, *The Galleon: The Great Ships of the Armada Era*, trans. Rachel Magowan (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1990). 10¾" x 7¾", cloth, 224 pages, 150 illustrations (photographs, plans, and line drawings), 1 appendix, notes, index. £25.

Until the arrival of this publication, there had been no comprehensive history of the first large class of sailing ship which followed the galleys. This work, the first by the author, states quite clearly that the term galleon was not confined to the ships of the Spanish Armada alone but encompassed a vast variety of relatively large sailing ships that were used for both commercial and military purposes.

The text has been divided into eight well defined chapters. While the first of these offers a historical study of the evolution of this type of vessel, the others focus on more technical and sociological factors. The last three chapters are intended to impart to the reader the necessary skills and information with which to construct a relatively accurate model of a typical galleon. The appendix consists of a reprint of the old English "Treatise on shipbuilding" which dates from circa 1620.

Unfortunately, with the exception of the first chapter, the general reader will probably find the text to be both overly technical and very complicated. It is almost impossible to discern whether this problem is due to the translator or the original author. In addition, the author seems to assume a great deal of knowledge on the part of the reader of the techniques required to make scratch-built models of wooden sailing ships. Although the numerous illustrations do help to clarify the text, they do not completely eradicate this difficulty.

Another minor problem arises with the ship that the author has decided to model in the text. Instead of choosing a well-known ship from this period, he decided to reconstruct a ship whose model used to hang in the Stockholm Cathedral. While he is to be complimented for his originality, this choice does present us with a few minor problems. First of all, we have no way of ascertaining with any great degree of accuracy if this model was actually based on any particular ship. Furthermore, as the author acknowledges in the text, one is also forced to exercise caution whenever the model's construction or even its appearance do not correspond fully to the shipbuilding techniques of its time. As well, we simply do not have any information which would allow us to determine the degree to which a model based on his plans would correspond to the actual ship However, it should be noted that this example does fulfil the author's primary goal in these chapters — to show us how to make a model of a ship from this period.

Despite these problems, this book does offer us some key information about these types of ships and ship construction methods in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In fact, it is probably the best source currently available on either of these two topics. However, because of its drawbacks, this book's appeal will probably be limited to those readers and model builders who are extremely familiar with its subject matter and modelmaking techniques.

PETER K. H. MISPELKAMP

Pointe Claire, Quebec

R.J.B. KNIGHT (compiler), *Portsmouth Record Series. Portsmouth Dockyard Papers 1771-1783: The American War* (Portsmouth, England: City of Portsmouth, 1987), illustrated, lxv + 196 pages.

This is the sixth volume of a series that was started in 1971. The previous five volumes were generally related directly to urban life; this present one concerns itself with nautical matters. There is a lengthy introduction which very carefully and precisely explains the operation of the dockyard at Portsmouth. The duties of various officials from resident commissioner to the humblest of clerical workers are examined closely. In a relatively brief

compass one is given a proper analysis of the administrative system. In addition, the work done by shipwrights, artificers, and naval storekeepers to maintain the naval vessels is explained. The excellent introduction sets the tone for the rest of the volume. The manuscripts which make up the calendar of dockyard papers are to be found in the surviving archives of the dockyard itself. There are some 477 bound volumes covering the years 1675 to 1900. Presently they are deposited in the library of the National Maritime Museum.

While the perusal of documents is largely for research purposes, these papers also provide fascinating insights into the daily lives of individuals who were associated with the dockyard. For example, on 28 June 1771, it was noted that forty-nine shipwrights did not come to work the previous day and some 500 were absent when the commissioner made his notation. Evidently there was disaffection among the workers. A number of men were discharged; in due course some who had indicated they had taken part in the work stoppage through pressure from their mates were re-employed. Another interesting and amusing entry is for 13 February 1771, when ruffians knocked a boatman senseless and robbed him of some cable. The latter was discovered six months later in a pub kept by one Thomas Hobbes; he was arraigned and charged at the next assizes. These are but two of the many and similar items that are set forth. Of course, one does not sit down and read this volume from cover to cover, but casual "dipping" makes for some considerable entertainment. However, the principal worth of what has been produced is a useful set of documentary material that is far from being readily available. Moreover, the editors having chosen "The American War" have added to the resources for research at the time of the Revolution. This reference volume should be in every research library in North America.

S.W. JACKMAN

University of Victoria

WILLIAM N. PETERSON, *"Mystic Built": Ships and Shipyards of the Mystic River, Connecticut, 1784-1919* (Mystic, Connecticut: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1989). 8¾" x 10¾", cloth, xvi + 254 pages, 201 illustrations, three appendices, bibliography and index. $45.00.

If maritime history is ever to gain the important position it once held as a sub-discipline, then maritime historians will have to adapt to modern historical interests and adopt modern historical methods. The recent work of Jeffrey Bolster, who combines black history with maritime history, and Lisa Norling, who works with family history, are but two examples of the several historians who have recognized this need.

In *"Mystic Built": Ships and Shipyards of the Mystic River, Connecticut, 1784-1919*, William N. Peterson has essentially delivered a town *cum* industry study. Although the book examines the infrastructure of a compact river region rather than a single community, it fits well within the finest traditions of New England town studies from Kenneth Lockridge's trend-setting examinations of Dedham to Christine Heyrman's contrapuntal comparison of Marblehead and Gloucester. Peterson begins by examining the fundamental factors, "regional, national, and international," ranging from statutory support through to the area's proximity to raw materials, that prompted the river's rise to prominence as a nationally recognized shipbuilding center. The rise of the coastal carrying trade, the New England fishing fleet, and, ultimately, the clipper ship era, all played a role in the success of the Mystic River shipbuilding industry. The shift from construction materials that originated from forests to those of underground origins, principally iron ore and petroleum, led to a decline in shipbuilding on the Mystic River as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, and steam and steel replaced wood and canvas.

Peterson's 113 pages of appendices will provide a rich resource for researchers whose interests include the maritime trades of the Mystic River vicinity. Undoubtedly, this book will have enduring scholarly value; at the same time, nevertheless, it is successfully directed toward those whose avocation lies in things maritime. The narrative flow of *"Mystic Built"* will provide them with captivating and superbly illustrated reading.

W.M.P. DUNNE

Sea Education Association, Inc.
Woods Hole, Massachusetts

PORTIA TAKAKJIAN, *The 32-Gun Frigate* Essex (Cedarburg, Wisconsin: Phoenix Publications, Inc., 1990. First published in the "Anatomy of the Ship" series by Conway Maritime Press Ltd., 1990). 9¾" x 10¼", cloth, 128 pages, 300+ illustrations and 15 halftones, bibliography. $27.95.

It is a pleasing revelation to discover the inclusion of an American frigate in Conway Maritime Press' prestigious "Anatomy of the Ship" series, which analyzes its subjects with studiously detailed drafts from all perspectives and angles. The experience is heightened by the expertise of the author Portia Takakjian, the professional ship-modeler and historian. The quality of her

line drawings is equal to that of William Avery Baker and superior to that of Howard I. Chapelle.

In *The 32-Gun Frigate* Essex, Takakjian leads us through the ship's development as one of the "subscription-built" warships authorized by Congress on 30 June 1798, a class aptly detailed by Frederick C. Leiner in "The Subscription Warships of 1798," *The American Neptune* 46, no. 3 (1986): 141-58. The book under review joins P.F.C. Smith's *The Frigate* Essex *Papers: Building the Salem Frigate 1798-1799* (Salem, Massachusetts: The Peabody Museum of Salem, 1974) as a valuable documentary history of this famous U.S. Navy raider. Satisfyingly, Takakjian takes us beyond the scope of Smith's book with an operational history of the "Salem frigate," and, most of all, by her superb naval architectural study of its construction and modifications over its life-span.

First, and perhaps most significantly from the point of revisionist history, she does justice to William Hackett by withdrawing him from the pall of temporary insanity incorrectly assigned to him by Secretary of War Henry Knox in 1794. Takakjian also goes one up on her reviewer, who studied the *Essex*'s dimensions as revised and recorded by Josiah Fox during its 1807-1809 rebuild at Washington Navy Yard (*Josiah Fox Papers*, Peabody Museum of Salem) without realizing that it was Fox's new mast and spar dimensions that doomed the frigate's previously sterling sailing qualities.

A professional draftswoman and illustrator, Takakjian's *pièce de resistance* comes in the detail drawings that are the backbone of the book. There are only two ways to gain the intimate familiarity with a hull necessary to accomplish this feat, either be the original designer, or produce a naval architectural model of the vessel, and the author has done the latter.

There are errors of composition and editing, including the common misconception that it was the Jeffersonians rather than the Federalists who dismembered the Navy with the Peace Establishment Act of 1801. Navy secretary Benjamin Stoddert engineered this legislation to achieve two objectives: protect the navy from total dissolution by the Republicans, and preserve the construction of the six 74-gun ships authorized in 1799. Considering the textual limitations of this type of book, however, the author must be applauded for the wealth of material she has nonetheless managed to present to her readers.

*The 32-Gun Frigate* Essex will be a valuable addition to the library shelves of historians, naval architects, ship-modelers, and all maritime history aficionados.

W.M.P. DUNNE

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E. S. VAN EYCK VAN HESLINGA, *Van compagnie naar koopvaardij De scheepvaartverbinding van de Bataafse Republic met de koloniën in Azie 1975-1806 [From company to free trade Shipping between the Batavian Republic and the colonies in Asia 1795-1806]* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1988). Hollandse Historische Reeks, IX. 7" x 9", cloth, 320 pages, 26 black and white and 6 color illustrations, maps, appendices, sources, notes, bibliography, glossary and indices. D.fl. 65.00.

The Dutch East India Company (VOC), formed in 1602, and for many years the largest enterprise in Europe, had already fallen on hard times when the armies of revolutionary France invaded the Netherlands in 1795. The efforts by the various institutions which acted as the successors of the VOC to maintain ties with Java, Japan and China in the new Batavian Republic is the story told with care, accuracy and exhaustive completeness by Dr. van Eyck van Heslinga. This work follows on the three volumes edited by J.R. Bruijn, F.S. Gaastra and I. Schoffer, *Dutch Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, which were reviewed by the late Archibald Lewis in *The American Neptune* in the summer of 1988 (48, no. 3: 206-207). Those volumes included detailed information on all the ships which travelled between the Netherlands and the East Indies up to 1795. This new single volume does the same for all voyages carried out by VOC successors from 1794 through to 1817. The appendices, which are nearly one-third of the book, give details of vessels and their cargoes and form the basis for the topical discussion of the organization of trade and the history of certain ventures which precedes them. The short English summary at the end of the text is a direct translation of the conclusion.

The War of the American Revolution had already given the VOC practice in maintaining contact with the Indies in the face of an ever more powerful hostile British navy. From 1780 to 1783 the Company resorted to the use of neutral flags and, as soon as possible, the same practice was followed in 1795. Surprising is the important role which American ships and shipping played in the history of Dutch Asiatic trade. Already in the years after American independence, ships from New England trading to China and the East Indies from the North Pacific coast of North America had contributed to the continuing decline of Dutch commerce. When the war broke out neutral American ships were preferred to circumvent the British blockade. In fact, Dutch officials in Batavia (Jakarta) liked American traders more than Dutch since the Americans paid high prices for goods, and in cash. The decline of the VOC before 1795 had already led the Company to limit the scope of its activity. The installation

of a liberal government in The Hague contributed even more to pressure for breaking of the monopoly enjoyed by the VOC. Even before the French invasion there were plans to wind up the VOC but the new government reorganized the institution, changing the name but keeping the form much the same, until 1806 when a government ministry finally became responsible for Asian commerce and introduced virtual free trade.

The different successors tried various ruses to subvert the British naval blockade and, in virtually every case because of poor organization, a lack of ships and men, a shortage of capital or a vigilant British navy, the schemes lost money. For ships coming from French, Spanish and Dutch colonies the British insisted that to avoid seizure not only did the ship have to be neutral but the goods had to be neutral, too. To get around that, in one case, an American bought goods from the Dutch, shipped them to the Netherlands in American-flag vessels and then sold them back to the Dutch all without money changing hands. The American merchant received a small percentage of the value of the cargo in exchange for lending his name to the subterfuge. American and Danish merchants secretly acting for the Dutch discovered that in some cases British warships still seized cargoes. Efforts to get them back through the British Admiralty courts were expensive and often unsuccessful. The short period of peace in 1802 did give some respite but it was too short and many Dutch ships got caught by the British when war began again before they could complete their voyages.

The Dutch were interested not only in maintaining trade with the Far East, bringing back cargoes of coffee, sugar and tea, but also in getting European troops out to staff the Indian army. The health problems which plagued the Dutch in the East Indies through the eighteenth century continued. Manpower problems were even more acute since connections to Europe were so sporadic. The officials in the Far East were typically not sympathetic to the new liberal government at home and sometimes ignored their nominal superiors, that is until Batavia finally fell to the British in 1811. The records are too incomplete to make a full accounting, but it certainly appears that Dutch trade with Batavia was a loss maker from 1795 to 1811.

On the other hand, trade with China, separately administered from 1796, did much better. Shipments of tea, largely handled secretly for the Dutch by the Swedish East India Company, proved very profitable. With the China trade as with the others, the author includes details of contracts, drawn from notarial acts. Some of the stories which emerge, such as the fate of VOC sailors from China and Japan stranded in Lisbon at the outbreak of the war, are fascinating. Some, on the other hand, are repetitive since the VOC successors often used the same methods again and again. In this as in the reports on the voyages the detail is extensive and perhaps too much so. The choice of describing the administration of trade first in Europe and then in Asia, and then dealing with the voyages and what happened to the ships, avoids a slavish chronological report but does introduce some repetition. The book is beautifully, aptly and extensively illustrated. The work is without doubt definitive. It is a valuable contribution to the political and institutional history of the Netherlands and the Netherlands Indies but also to the maritime and commercial history of a number of states, among others the United States and Japan.

RICHARD W. UNGER

University of British Columbia
Vancouver, B. C.

# In Appreciation

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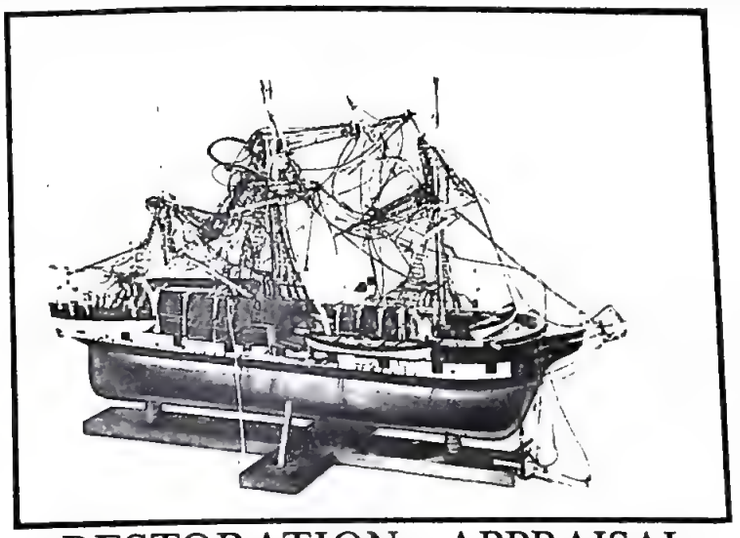

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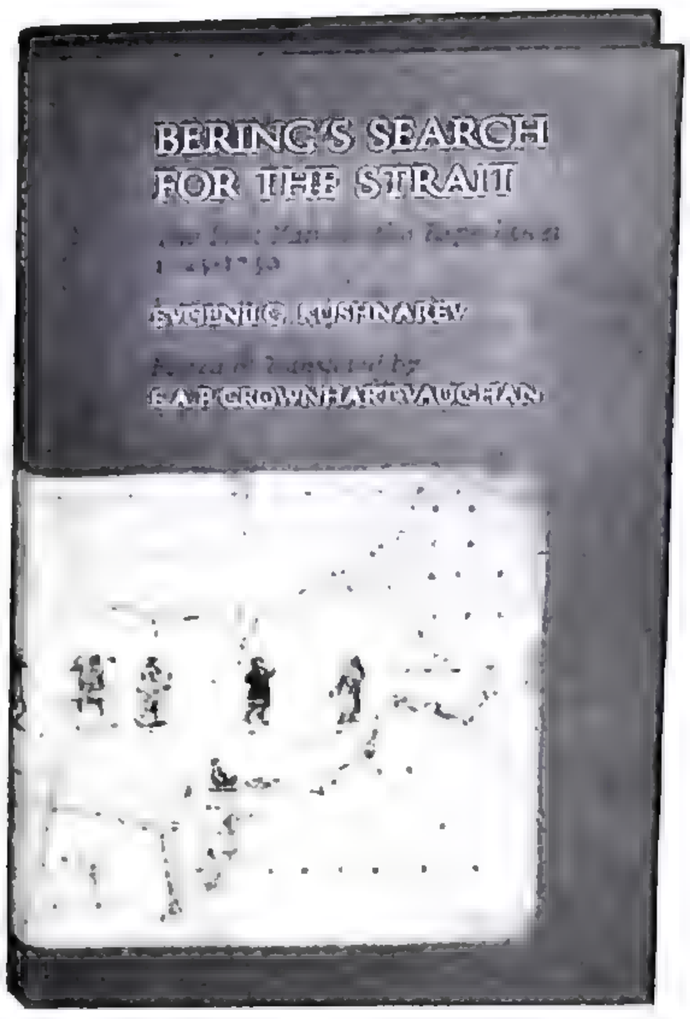


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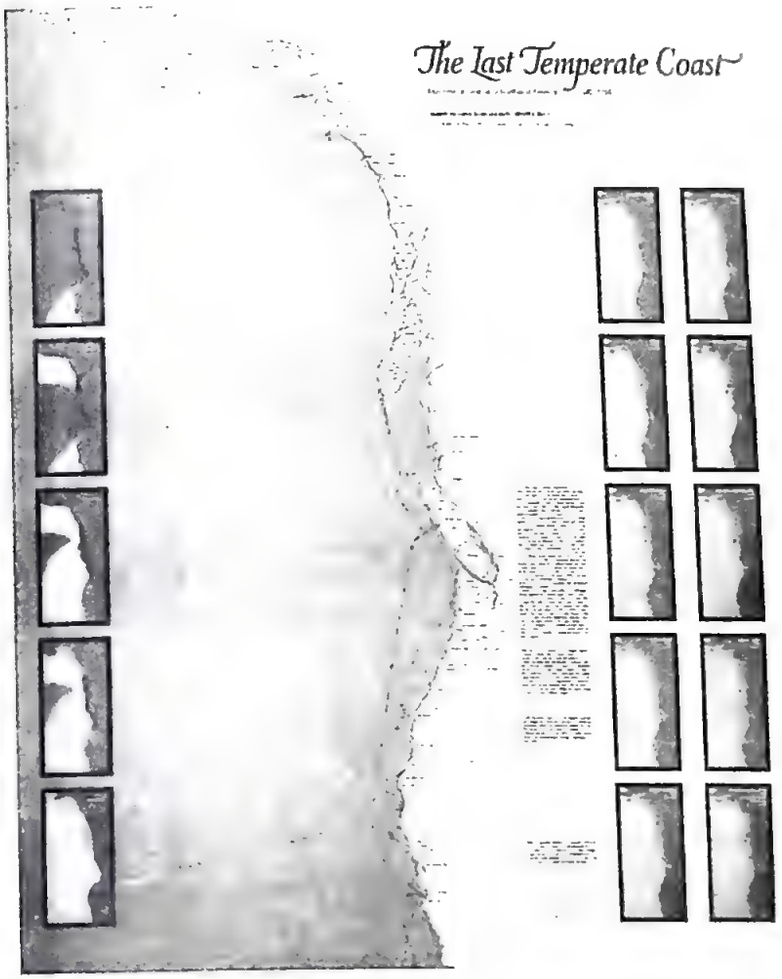


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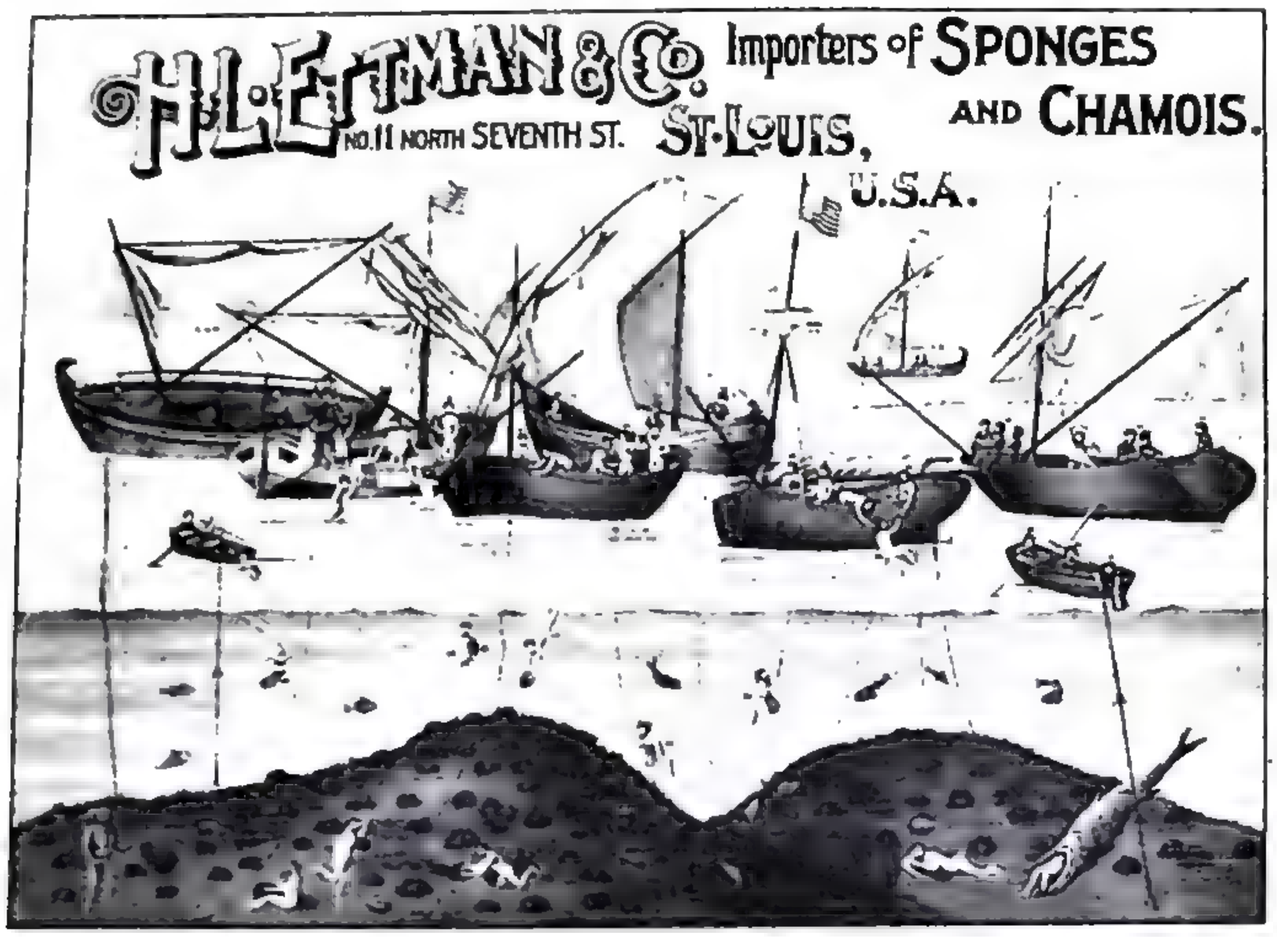


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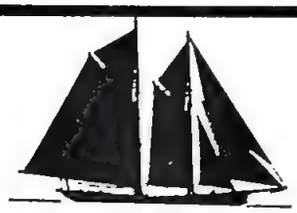

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Nominations for articles published during 1990 should be sent to:

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**Gallery Catalogs:**
The Lore of the Sea $12.00
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